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THE SECOND BOOK OF THE GRAMOPHONE RECORD

Giving Advice upon the Selection of Fifty good
Records from Schubert to Stravinsky, a Listener's
Description of their Music, Translations of the
Words of any Songs included, and a Glossary
of all necessary Technical Terms

BY

PERCY A. *ed* SCHOLES

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TO
SIR HENRY WOOD

A consistent supporter
of his first rival in the
popularisation of orchestral
music in this country—
THE GRAMOPHONE

14555

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INTRODUCTION

I AM sure I hope that this book may be helpful to those who read it, for it has been a most uncomfortable book to write.

Dr. Johnson, when somebody talked of 'happy moments' for literary composition, and 'how a man may write at one time and not at another', flashed out one of his habitual slap-in-the-face contradictions—'Nay, Sir, a man may write at any time if he set himself doggedly to it'.

But at the moment when Dr. Johnson said this he was on holiday in the Hebrides, a holiday during which, so far as I remember the records of it, he was never called upon to set pen to paper.

Moreover, Dr. Johnson never had to write a book about Gramophone Records. The nearest task to this which ever fell to the great man's lot was the compilation of a Dictionary, than which he admitted that the writing of poetry was easier. 'His mind was less on the stretch in doing the one than the other. Besides, composing a Dictionary requires books and a desk: you may make a poem walking in the fields or lying in bed'.

So you may, and would I were a poet! But even a Dictionary is surely less elaborate in the apparatus it demands than a Book of the Gramophone Record. For in labouring at the latter, one needs not only 'books and a desk' (many books, by the way, for one never knows how little one knows until one comes to set forth one's knowledge for others), but a Gramophone, Records galore, and many musical scores.

How to Write a Book Like This.

This is how you go about the task. You fill a house with Records of the periods and styles you propose to discuss,

leaving yourself merely room to work, and your wife merely room to approach you from time to time with sustenance.

One by one the Records are tested upon the Gramophone, and those that are badly defective are thrown into the garden, which gradually assumes the appearance of the shale heap above a coal pit.

Having reduced your thousands to a mere few hundreds, you take down from your library the scores of the music reproduced in these, and make a further contribution to the pile outside, by adding any Records which are flagrantly 'cut', or which distort the instrumental tone so that the innocent hearer is in danger of mistaking a Violin for a Flute, or a Cor Anglais for a Bassoon.

You next consider whether what you have left adequately illustrate the periods and styles you have in mind, and quickly discover that they do not; you therefore reluctantly bring in from the garden certain records which you would have preferred to leave there, as merely worthy of a prominent position in the gramophonist's apocrypha, and replace them in the canon.

You then begin to consider how you shall reduce the pile before you to still smaller dimensions, and your faith in your critical acumen slowly sinks, for this entails considerations of relative historical value of composers, relative artistic value of compositions, and relative executive value of conductors and performers, which considerations, merged, constitute an intellectual bog or Slough of Despond.

At this stage of the proceedings you are careful not to discuss your difficulties with any friend who may interrupt you by a call, for it is certain that no two people could possibly think alike upon a matter so complex. But if quite unable to decide upon a particular knotty point, you put it to such a friend determined to accept his decision unquestioningly, as a dignified alternative to the toss of a coin.

At last your heap of, say, two hundred and forty Records has dwindled to sixty, and to cast out the further ten

costs you more endeavour and more mental pain than had been entailed by the casting out of any previous hundred.

At this point you discover that one or two of your fifty, chosen with such care, have been inexplicably withdrawn from the catalogues of the company that issued them, and further, that one or two scores missing from your library (probably borrowed by somebody !) are not to be obtained in this country without much difficulty and expense.

Somehow, by the active exercise of the British instinct for 'muddling through', you reach at length the point where the actual writing of the book can begin. Your realisation of this fact is the bursting of the sun through clouds, but they soon draw over again. For you find that the work is a matter of down-sitting and up-rising, of starting a Record again and again, in the effort to find where the 'cut' occurs, or to decide whether a certain instrument is actually omitted, or merely escapes your ear by its over-modesty.

There is no clear run of a quarter of an hour in this business. I dedicated the first volume of this work to a distinguished novelist who writes about the Gramophone and its Records and edits a paper devoted to the interests of their users: I warrant he finds the novel the easier task, as Dr. Johnson did the poem !

The Reward.

But there is a certain reward. The process of manufacture of such a commodity as the present is one which yields an important by-product, and this you are allowed to keep as your perquisite. 'Who watereth others, shall himself be watered'—a passage of scripture which, when I was a child, my mother used to quote with a sad smile when she caught sight of my clothes as I came in from attending to my little garden plot, and one a less literal application of which I am constantly finding myself making in these later years. In studying scores and records in order to

write such minute and searching descriptions as this book attempts one learns enormously. Details in favourite compositions which one had previously quite overlooked, or of which one had only been vaguely and subconsciously aware, at last come clearly to one's notice. Both beauties and defects in the piece one is studying become more obvious than ever before. For it is one thing to hear a symphony occasionally at Queen's Hall, and another to domesticate it, examining each of its Movements, section by section, ten or twenty or thirty times.

The Critic—Time.

It is often suggested that the only true critic is Time, and that not what he of the *Sunday Times* or *Observer* thinks of a composer or composition to-day is decisive, but what the public will think of the composer or composition in twenty or thirty years.

This is fair enough, but I would point out that by means of the Gramophone one may telescope Time—reduce him to smaller dimensions, compress him and imbibe his essence as that of an ox in a tea-cup. Thus may a diligent and thoughtful listener perform twenty years' criticism in the space of two days.

This is worth a moment's further thought. After all, these unassailable decisions of posterity are due not to any superior wisdom on posterity's part, but mainly to the accumulation of opinions resulting from a work having been frequently heard. I am aware that other factors enter into the matter, but this factor is, I think, the one prevailing, and it is one which, by means of the Gramophone, we can artificially produce.

Sitting on the Fence.

The complaint is sometimes made against a critic that, in his expressions concerning some particular composer or composition, he is 'sitting on the fence'. If he is an honest critic, that is exactly where he must often sit, for it would be

folly in him to assert that after one hearing of a complex work in a new style, he is in a position to deliver a final opinion upon it. If, however, it were made the law of England that a new musical work should at once be issued in the form of a printed score and gramophone record, or even of the latter only, the precarious seat need be of short duration. A critic would shut himself in his closet for a couple of hours every day, determined that before the week was out he would possess himself of the gist of the music, and on the following Sunday trumpet the truth to the world.

Some mistakes the critic would perhaps still make ; occasionally he might find, when the twenty years had passed, that he had descended from the fence into the wrong field, and might regretfully climb, or nimbly (and, as he might hope, unnoticed) vault the fence into the other. But his percentage of error would be greatly reduced, and if not all his judgments remained settled and solid until the very end of his critical life, he would at least feel sure as he uttered them, that for him, in his then state of mental and musical development, what he was giving forth was the truth—'whole and nothing but'.

Certainty in Criticism.

For there are two kinds of certainty in critical assertion. A man may rarely (and perhaps always rashly) feel that what he is writing is truth eternal and unchangeable, or he may more modestly feel that it is at any rate truth as far as concerns him, John Jones, in that month or year of his life. In other words, his 'mind is made up', he 'knows his mind'—which is with every thoughtful critic at present far from being always the case.

The Plain Man as Critic.

Note, moreover, that this advantage of a greater faith in one's opinions is one which the Gramophone, though it at present refuses it to the professional critic as regards the

most recent compositions, confers upon the very man in the street as concerns the classics and the less recent modern works. It enables him to decide for himself as to whether Brahms is, or is not, the great man that successive critics of the *Times* have always asserted, whether there is, as certain bold spirits affirm, a degree of boresomeness in some of Beethoven's compositions, whether Delius is the underrated composer that his biographer contends, whether Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* is the work of genius that many even of his latter-day opponents believe, and whether in *Rout* Bliss is merely the young man exuberant, or something more worthy of a wide public admiration.¹

The man who is not able to begin to form a definite opinion upon a composer's worth after ten daily performances of that work upon his gramophone for five successive days, is a man who will never make up his mind about anything, and whose only chance of getting married must lie or have lain in a good use of leap year.

Undeveloped Appreciative Powers.

It is pathetic to find so many keen gramophonists who have made insufficient use of the facilities they enjoy, and whose ability to appreciate and discriminate remains the same after years of ownership of an instrument. One of these much-to-be-pitied persons wrote to *The Gramophone* the other day :

' I wonder whether there are many people like myself, who though disliking modern fox-trot music nevertheless do not care to stock a large amount of classical music of the heavy kind ? I allude to records of concertos and symphonies, which though containing some of the cleverest strokes of genius of the celebrated people who composed them, are nevertheless often depressing to the ear of those like myself who are not sufficiently educated musically to find entertainment in them. During the fifteen years or so that I have used a gramophone I have found the class of music which brightens and entertains my friends mostly lies between the two extremes of the fox-trot and the

¹ Alas ! The *Rout* Record is inexplicably withdrawn—and I had spent two days on a careful examination and description of it !

heavy concerto. In this class I place the best numbers from the grand operas, brilliant continental waltzes, many *intermezzos*, *serenades* and ballet music. I have found, however, that the cream of this "pretty" music is usually played by the best cinema bands as the incidental music for most dramas. . . . My contention is that the makers of records would do well to keep in touch with all the exquisite music played by the leading cinema bands. For the moderate lover of music it cannot be beaten. Possibly the sole reason that gramophonists have not asked for such music is that the majority of them have no idea what to ask for—cinema managers not being in the habit of providing their audiences with programmes of the music.'

Now what on earth has this person been doing during those fifteen years? He admits that what he calls 'classical music of the heavy kind' contains 'some of the cleverest strokes of genius of the celebrated people who composed it', and yet, after that long period of great and ever-increasing opportunity, is not 'sufficiently educated to find entertainment in them'. He might by now claim to be an understanding lover of the 'Great Masters', and unabashed, mildly declares himself 'a moderate lover of music', and a devotee of the smaller gods of the cinema orchestra. If there are many people like that about it is a wonder that Providence does not, by some sudden catastrophe, withdraw from the world its priceless boon of the Gramophone.

Indifference to Music.

It cannot I think be gainsaid that a knowledge of the great things of music is a part of an educated man's ordinary general culture. G. K. Chesterton could write a History of England in which he said nothing about the art, and H. G. Wells a History of the World in which he performed the same feat of forgetfulness. I have heard Hilaire Belloc at a dinner in aid of a fund for helping deserving musicians publicly declare that he knew nothing of music, and Gilbert Frankau at a meeting in a London theatre in support of a scheme for a national opera house explain with much care his absolute insensibility to music. But, whatever the

varying ages of these men, their unashamed neglect (or, in some cases perhaps, actual contempt) of the art belongs to a past period, and, at the current rate of the world's advance in musical appreciation, in another decade such an attitude of ignorant superiority will have become as impossible as would be to-day that of an author who might write a history of British culture ignoring Shakespeare, or that of a popular novelist who might rise amongst an audience of cultured people and take pleasure in declaring his indifference to Titian.

A 'Motto of Mediocrity'.

A recent contributor to the paper already mentioned took a more reasonable view of the privilege and responsibilities than the correspondent I have just quoted. Without any great originality but with much pertinence he pleaded in the following words for public acknowledgement and respect of himself as a 'Jack of all Tastes':

'Having sententiously framed up a motto of philosophy in the precocity of my youth, I have since come more and more to see it as a growing marvel of almost inexhaustible truth and beauty. It is: "A man's real riches consist in the variety of his powers of appreciation." Applied in whatever direction, it is a joy and gain to extend one's appreciation inside and outside the arts and sciences—appreciation coupled with a measure of executive ability. This, of course, absolutely precludes the possibility of any but a superman becoming a master—a specialist. Now that is a specific loss to be balanced up against a general gain. Call my motto—for I face facts—a motto of mediocrity. Well, there are degrees of mediocrity, and step by step—for one must start in all things—it is possible to attain a fairly high level of mediocrity, somewhere near the godlike specialists without their isolation.

'Comparisons we must have, but I have always shrunk from many as unnecessarily invidious, as music is the greatest of the arts, *ditto* painting, *ditto* literature, etc. The same as to the sciences, sociology, medicine, etc. Comparisons we need to make, but let them be useful. For what breadth, what sympathy, what real understanding, what humour, what *life* one can gain by a versatile knowledge of these correlating, interacting realms of human appreciation.'

It is for that gentleman and others like him that this

book and its predecessor have been written, and, whatever be the virtues and defects of these books, I claim that some scheme like the one they outline is precisely what 'Jacks of all Tastes' require. For the 'Jack of all Tastes' (who is, surely, no other than the normal intelligent, cultivated man) in his reading of History tries to acquire familiarity with *leading* events, policies and personalities, in literature with the *great* poems and prose works of the ages, and especially with those of his own country, in painting with the *typical* works of the best painters of the best schools. To all these things a course of study, such as is here outlined, supplies the musical equivalent, and the man or woman who has gone through the course of listening prescribed by these two books, and gone through it thoughtfully, whatever masterpieces may still remain unknown to him or her, may claim the possession of a fair, all-round musical education. I may have suggested to him merely the irreducible minimum of what an educated person should know about music, but possessed of that minimum he has in his possession the key to all periods and styles.

The Composers Here Treated.

For consider the list, upon another page, of composers treated in these two *Books of the Gramophone Record*; I really mean consider it, not merely skim it.

I maintain that to know, and to know in perfect intimacy, one, at least, of the works of each of these men is to know Music. In that list is sketched the development of the whole modern art of sounds. What I have really done has been to compile an Anthology, and if every man had his rights I, proudly swelling, should be numbered in the public esteem with the world's Quiller Couchs and Palgraves.

The Cost of a Musical Education.

But a poetical Anthology costs a mere shilling or two, whereas the Records which constitute this musical

anthology cost, I estimate, between seventeen and eighteen pounds.

What of that? If you possess a Gramophone, you *must* provide Gramophone fodder. And if you do not possess a Gramophone, the cost of a good one, plus the cost of the Records I have recommended, will amount to less than the cost of a decent piano, an article with which every young married couple, whether it can play or not, provides itself as a matter of course, and a piece of furniture demanded by the merest respectability.

Needless to say, not every one of the Records mentioned in these two volumes need be considered an essential part of a first outfit, though the whole set of them, together with an instrument, would constitute one of the best wedding presents I can imagine. A first choice can be made, and periodical additions made to it, the order of acquirement of the Records being dictated, naturally, by personal preferences.

The Limitations of Preference.

But I want to suggest that these preferences should not be taken too seriously. The normal man or woman may take it for granted that the area of his or her present appreciation of music does not even approach in extent the potential area of that appreciation.

There is hardly a piece included in my list which does not possess thousands of devoted admirers, and this is some evidence that there is hardly a piece included which the present reader might not come to enjoy did he but know it well enough. The recent *Morning Post* anecdote of the old lady in a London concert hall listening to Schönberg with an ear trumpet, removing it with a start as the music began, examining it, shaking it, putting it to her ear again, and at last in despair at the apparent continued defects of her instrument getting up and walking out, is suggestive. In nine cases out of ten, where a piece of ancient or of modern music is approved by a

considerable body of musicians but not by a particular listener, it is not the music but the aural apparatus of that listener that is at fault. I dare not affirm that *Pierrot Lunaire* is a masterpiece; it does not yet exist in gramophonic form and the score is in places puzzling, so I am merely generalising. On the Sunday afternoon before I wrote this Introduction, sitting outside a tent on the edge of the Yorkshire moors, I lent the occupants of the nearest farmhouse my Gramophone and two boxes of Records. I dropped in and found them in the middle of a performance of Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy*. They admitted that to them it sounded 'as though someone had put on two Records at once', but they went through it to the end, every one of them carefully listening, and agreed that 'at any rate it helped to pass the time'. I am not sure that the *spirit* of the *Poem of Ecstasy* is one which would ever appeal to my friends of the farm, but they were more prepared to give the piece a chance than a good many London concert-goers were when it was first introduced, and complex though its web may be, were I to lend them the Record repeatedly they would, I think, come to 'understand' it, whether they loved it or not.

In passing I may say that I have omitted the Records of this very piece from my list with great regret, and in the hope that the company which has been enterprising enough to give us them will see its way to assembling again the huge orchestra, under the same fine conductor, and providing us with a more balanced performance. It cannot be an easy task to produce a perfect Record of a work of so much complexity.

The Principles of Selection.

A few words upon some of the principles that have guided me in making my selection may be desirable.

To begin with, let me say that absolutely no trade consideration whatever has come into the question. At the moment of writing these, the last pages of the book to

be written, I do not even know, except in a very vague way, what are the proportions in which the different firms are represented. Musical criteria alone have directed my choice. I have in the past found the various firms engaged in this industry entirely sportsmanlike, both in their readiness to help me in every possible way and in their equal readiness to accept the results, and I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to them.

Some of what I may, without disrespect, call the smaller recording companies (smaller, at least, as regards their output of Records of serious music) are not represented in this book at all. If I have in any respect been unjust it may be in this detail, and I am willing freely to admit to these companies that I am not so minutely acquainted with their output as with that of their elder competitors. If they feel I am in danger of overlooking musically valuable Records of their production, it is for them to bring these regularly to my notice, when I will gladly give them the same examination as I am accustomed to give to the products of the firms who already take the trouble to keep me fully informed as to their output.

As in the *First Book of the Gramophone Record*, I have not been solely guided in my choice by considerations either of musical value, as illustrating the course of musical evolution, or of excellence of performance or recording. All these considerations have, as already stated, been merged.

It may, perhaps, be noted that there are not a great many Piano Records or Solo Vocal Records included, though neither of these departments is by any means seriously neglected here. The Piano, as an instrument, records less well than other instruments, and its music usually calls for less commentary than Orchestral or String Quartet music. After the first portion of the period represented in the Volume (that of Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schumann) the Piano ceases to be so important a means of expression to composers, and, moreover, the later Piano composers

(such, for instance, as Scriabin, whose long range of Piano music is marvellously interesting and often beautiful) are very poorly represented as yet in the catalogues of the recording companies. As for Songs—if only the companies paid more attention to the great *Lieder* writers they would compel me to give more space to their vocal records. It is one of the regrettable features of gramophony to-day that the songs of Schubert, Schumann and other of the great German song-wrights are not to be obtained—at all events in this country. French and English songs are also neglected, and Russian songs are usually recorded by either Chaliapine or Rosing, both of whom have provided wonderful records of fine music which is yet only half acceptable to the wider public from the fact that the Russian language has, almost necessarily, been employed.

Wagner is represented in this book by only one Record, yet no composer has of late years been more generously treated by the recording companies. My feeling as to Wagner has been that if I once fairly began the discussion of Records of his work, I should not know where to stop, and that the best way of treating his Music Dramas would be by means of a special *Book of the Wagner Records* which would describe some of his Music Dramas as wholes—an ambitious plan, obviously outside the scope of the present volume.

In choosing the Records of British music, I have been in much doubt. John Ireland's Piano and Violin Sonata I should certainly have felt obliged to include were its performance not very badly 'cut'. McEwen's *Solway Symphony*, for instance, has been omitted solely on grounds of space, and in the hope that some opportunity may occur of making amends. And so with other works which might be mentioned.

Sins of Omission and Commission.

As with the *First Book of the Gramophone Record*, so with the Second—my many readers may wish that I had

included some particular Record, but few, I think, will object to any that I have included.

My desire to include works as wholes, as much as possible, has of course limited me somewhat in the number of composers and pieces I could represent amongst my fifty Records. But where a piece of chamber music or of orchestral music in several movements has been recorded, I have, if I included it at all, felt it right to include it as a whole.

In cases where more than one company has recorded a piece, I have, with great care, chosen the Record or set of Records which I considered the best. In cases where I have found the Records of one company to be better in one respect, and the Records of a competing company to be better in another, I have frankly stated the fact.

It must be remembered, however, that I have not tried every Record upon every make of Gramophone, and with every make of sound-box and needle, which might be a field of research too extensive even for an author with more leisure than I. I can only claim that, on the lines I have adopted, I have carried out the difficult work of selection with great care and a due sense of responsibility.

The Listener's History of Music.

As in the case of the *First Book of the Gramophone Record*, so in the case of this second one, I have omitted discussion of the historical position of composers and particulars of their lives. The companion to the *First Book* already exists in Volume I. of the *Listener's History of Music*, and the companion to the *Second Book* is to be similarly provided in Volume II. of that History.

Inasmuch as music itself is more important than its history, and as I could not write two books at one time, I have thought it best to provide the guide to the music before the handbook of its history. But I hope that the second volume of the *Listener's History* will not be long delayed.

On Behalf of Plain English.

I have taken the liberty of translating into English the labels of the Records in all cases where they needed it. I believe that ours is the only country in the world where concert givers and Gramophone Record makers prefer foreign languages. We even go so far as to give Russian titles in French, an absurdity for which there is no excuse. The implied romantic attraction of foreign titles is a manifestation of snobbery with which I have no sympathy. A musical journal has just said :

‘ We notice a reference to Debussy’s *Afternoon of a Faun* in an American contemporary. Presumably there is no earthly reason why *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune* should not be translated word for word, but the result cannot be proclaimed a huge success.’

Why is it not a success ? It is an exact literal translation. If there is anything wrong with it, Debussy and Mallarmé, and not the translator, must take the blame. At all events I have used that very title in this book. Of course we all know French and German and Italian nowadays—but we ought to remember that some of our neighbours don’t.

Where, however, the composer has originally used a language other than his own, I have left his title undisturbed.

The Use of Orchestral Scores.

I want to urge an increase in the number of gramophonists who study orchestral records with the full orchestral score. This is a delightful occupation, and not nearly so difficult as may be supposed. I give some hints on the subject in my discussion of Wagner’s *Siegfried’s Death March*, on pages 37 to 41. More people would take up the use of full scores if it were recognised that to get useful guidance from them it is not necessary to be able to read the actual musical notes (which involves an understanding of ‘transposing instruments’). If you are capable of following the general shape of a melody (as shown in musical notation) and the general character of a rhythm, you are in a position to use a full score to some advantage.

TABLE OF COMPOSERS REPRESENTED IN THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF THE GRAMOPHONE RECORD.

An exact classification of composers, such as would admit of no dispute, is here impossible, for fine shades and subtle spiritual relationships cannot be expressed in cold tabular form. The classification adopted below is, then, admittedly rough-and-ready, and the word 'school' is used in a wide sense. For particulars of the lives and works of these composers, and of their position in the history of the art, see *The Listener's History of Music*.

Madrigalists and Virginalists.

Edwards	.	.	.	.	1523-66
Byrd	.	.	.	.	1543-1623
Bull	.	.	.	.	1562-1628
Farmer	.	.	.	.	1565-1605
Wilbye	.	.	.	.	1574-1638
Weelkes	.	.	.	.	1575-1623
Gibbons	.	.	.	.	1583-1625
Bennet	.	.	.	.	?—?
Tomkins	.	.	.	.	1573-1656
Bateson	.	.	.	.	1570-1630

Earlier Eighteenth Century Composers.

Purcell	.	.	.	.	1658 (or 1659)-95
Couperin	.	.	.	.	1668-1733
Rameau	.	.	.	.	1683-1764
Scarlatti	.	.	.	.	1685-1757
Bach	.	.	.	.	1685-1750
Handel	.	.	.	.	1685-1759

The Earlier Symphonists.

Haydn	.	.	.	.	1732-1809
Mozart	.	.	.	.	1756-91

The Later Symphonists.

Beethoven	1770-1827
Schubert	1797-1828

Italian Opera Writers.

Rossini	1792-1868
Verdi	1813-98

The Romantics.

Mendelssohn	1809-47
Chopin	1809-49
Schumann	1810-56

Two Nationalists.

Dvořák	1841-1904
Grieg	1843-1907

Russians.

Rimsky-Korsakof	1844-1908
Moussorgsky	1839-81
Tchaikovsky	1840-93
Stravinsky	born 1882

Later Germans.

Wagner	1813-83
Brahms	1833-97
Strauss	born 1864

The Modern French School.

Franck	1822-90
Debussy	1862-1918
Ravel	born 1875

The Modern British School.

Elgar	born 1857
Delius	born 1863
Vaughan Williams	born 1872
Holst	born 1874
Frank Bridge	born 1879

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I wish warmly to thank those representatives of the H.M.V., Columbia, and Aeolian Companies, who have kindly helped me in very many ways, and Mr. C. M. Crabtree, B.A., B.Mus., Mr. A. C. Praeger, F.R.C.O., and Mr. W. R. Anderson, B.Mus., Editor of *The Music Teacher*, who have read the proofs; also the various Publishers who have granted permission for the use of words of songs or of extracts from music or books of which they hold the copyright—their names being, it is hoped, in every case mentioned on the appropriate pages.

RECORD No. 1

Pianoforte Solos	{	'The Bees' Wedding' or 'Spinning Song'		
				Mendelssohn
		<i>Prelude in F, Op. 28, No. 23</i>	.	Chopin
		<i>Butterfly</i>	.	Grieg
		<i>Moment Musical, Op. 94, No. 3</i>	.	Schubert

MAURICE COLE

Mendelssohn. *Song Without Words, No. 34.*

Of all Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, No. 34 is probably the greatest favourite. In most editions it is called 'Spinning Song'; the makers of this Record and many of those who play and hear the piece call it 'The Bees' Wedding'. Neither of these names can claim any official authorisation; Mendelssohn simply left the piece as a 'Song Without Words'—and without them even as to title.

The same feature of this piece has been the origin of both its popular titles; the continuous semiquavers that run through its hundred bars apparently suggest to some minds the buzz of bees and to others the hum of a spinning wheel.

It may be of interest here to state which of the titles given to the *Songs Without Words* were the invention of the author. They are those of the two *Gondola Songs*, the *Duet*, the *Folk Song* and the *Spring Song*; all other titles are the invention of publishers or the public.

It is as the composer of *Elijah* and of the *Songs Without Words* that Mendelssohn is known to many in this country. There is, perhaps, hardly a British piano without its copy of some or all of the latter. Yet they were not immediately popular here. Novello's published the first book of them in 1832, and in 1836 had sold only 114 copies.

The expression *Song Without Words* is Mendelssohn's own. The remarks that follow are those of one of his greatest

admirers, the late Sir George Grove (*Dictionary of Music*, article 'Mendelssohn') :

'Not a few of Beethoven's movements—such as the adagio of the Sonata Pathétique, or the minuet of Op. 10, No. 3—might be classed as songs without words, and so might Field's nocturnes ; but the former of these are portions of larger works, not easily separable, and the latter were little known ; and neither of them possess that grace and finish, that intimate charm, and above all that *domestic* character, which have ensured the success of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* in many an English family. They soon became identified with his name as it grew more and more familiar in England ; some of them were composed here, others had names or stories attached to their origin : there was a piquancy about the very title—and all helped their popularity.

His own feeling towards them was by no means so indulgent. It is perhaps impossible for a composer to be quite impartial towards pieces that make him so very popular, but he distinctly says, after the issue of Book 3, "that he does not mean to write any more at that time, and that if such *animalculæ* are multiplied too much, no one will care for them," etc.

It is difficult to believe that so stern a critic of his own productions should not have felt the weakness of some of them, and the strong mannerism which, with a few remarkable exceptions, pervades the whole collection. We should not forget, too, that he is not answerable for the last two books, which were published after his death, without the great alterations which he habitually made before publication.

One drawback to the excessive popularity of the *Songs without Words* is, not that they exist—for we might as well quarrel with Goethe for the *Wandrer's Nachtlied* or the *Haidenröslein*—nor yet the number of imitations they produced, but that in the minds of thousands these graceful trifles, many of which were thrown off at a single sitting, are indiscriminately accepted as the most characteristic representatives of the genius of the composer of the Violin Concerto and the *Hebrides* Overture.'

Mendelssohn's own feelings towards these works were probably much the same as those of Rachmaninof towards 'The Prelude'. He hated to be known to the public by his smaller and less important productions, and to receive the most vociferous approbation from people who did not know his real life work.

Chopin. *Prelude in F major.*

Twenty-four Preludes of Chopin form his Opus 28, and were published in 1839, when he was nearly thirty. They are very varied in length and character, some being simple expressions of single thoughts and others well-wrought expositions of extended trains of thought.

Like each book of Bach's Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues, these Preludes follow a sequence covering the whole range of keys. Whereas, however, Bach associates his pieces as tonic majors and minors, Chopin does so as relative majors and minors, *i.e.*, Bach places next to one another C major and C minor, Chopin C major and A minor, and so forth. Moreover, instead of taking the series in alphabetical order as Bach does (C, C sharp, D, and so on), Chopin takes them in a cycle of rising fifths (C major and A minor, G major and E minor, and so on). Chopin's intention then was that the series should be played as a whole, and he adopted an order of succeeding keys that made this possible without any shock to the listener.

Schumann, when the Preludes appeared, reviewed them as follows in the musical journal he then edited :

'I must signalise the Preludes as most remarkable. I will confess that I expected something quite different, carried out in the grand style, like his Etudes. It is almost the contrary here ; these are sketches, the beginnings of studies, or, if you will, ruins, eagles' feathers, all wildly, variegatedly intermingled. But in every piece we find, in his own refined hand, written in pearls, " This is by Frederick Chopin " ; we recognise him even in his pauses, and by his impetuous respiration. He is the boldest, the proudest, poet-soul of to-day. To be sure, the book also contains some morbid, feverish, repellent traits ; but let every one look in it for something that will enchant him. Philistines, however, must keep away.'¹

The Prelude recorded by Mr. Cole is No. 23 of the series, in the key of F major. It is only twenty-two bars long. From beginning to end there is a continuous flow of right-

¹ See Ashton Jonson—*Handbook to Chopin's Works* (William Reeves, 8s. 6d.).

hand semiquavers, under the surface of which float left hand snatches of melody.

Note how, at the end, when both hands are busied, arpeggio-fashion, with the chord of the key-note, the left hand introduces an E flat, so turning this chord into the 'dominant seventh' chord, and leaving an expectation of a modulation to the key of B flat which is never consummated. It is a fanciful touch.



Grieg. *Butterfly*.

Why on earth the publisher of a Record of this piece should translate its title into a language that is neither that of the composer nor of his customers I cannot tell. To the French Gramophonist it may be *Papillon*; to us it is *Butterfly*.

Butterfly comes from the third of the ten books of *Lyric Pieces* (Op. 43).

'The opus numbers (12, 38, 43, 47, 54, 57, 62, 65, 68, 71) indicate that these pieces represent every stage of their composer's activity, from the earliest to the latest.'

'Grieg's critical sense and good taste are manifested in the fact that there is an almost unprecedentedly large proportion of high-class pieces in these collections of his compositions. The trivial, the banal, the commonplace are remarkably rare. In my copy of the *Lyrische Stücke* there are only half-a-dozen that are not marked with at least one star of excellence. Each player will, of course, do his own "starring"; but it is well to bear in mind that this music, simple and easy though much of it is, must not be judged at a first hearing. Some pieces in my copy that were at first unmarked now have two stars! No two

amateurs will agree in all cases as to where the stars and the double-stars belong; but all will find that the stars grow more and more numerous on acquaintance, as they do on a dark night if we gaze intently at the sky. Delicacy of touch and tenderness of feeling, however, are absolutely necessary if one would get acquainted with the best there is in these pieces.'

The above is an extract from Mr. Finck's *Grieg and his Music* (John Lane, 8s. 6d.). If it errs it does so by overstatement. There are some commonplace pages even in Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, yet the ten books do, one must admit, maintain a high general level. These are, one may say, the *Songs Without Words* of a later generation, with a touch of virility which, in a general way, distinguishes them from the eight books of the Mendelssohn series.

The particular *Lyric Piece* now to be heard requires little description. The freakish flutterings justify the name. There are two alternating musical thoughts, the first of which, though dainty and pleasant, is cosmopolitan and impersonal, the second of which embodies a phrase that is quite Scandinavian and typically Griegian.

Mr. Cole's playing has the 'delicacy of touch and tenderness of feeling' demanded by Mr. Finck in the passage above quoted. His reproduction has been included in the present book partly because it offers a demonstration of the real musical value sometimes to be obtained in the less expensive brands of Gramophone Records.

Schubert. *Moment Musical.*

The work of Schubert really comes within the scope of the *First Book of the Gramophone Record*. But it lies on the border line between the 'classical' period which closed that book and the 'romantic' period that opens this. And in the *First Book* no example of Schubert's piano music was included.

There are six of the Musical Moments (Op. 94), of which the one here, very beautifully played by Mr. Cole, is No. 3.

Notice in the performance the slight slackenings and hastenings of speed, so naturally done and so effective—and so different from the rhythmic distortions which, with many pianists, constitute an ‘interpretation’ of a classic.

It may be of interest to quote an expression of Schubert’s own views upon piano playing, from a letter he wrote to his father, when away from home, in 1825 :—

‘ I played solos, and did not make altogether a failure of the job, for I was told that the piano keys sang, like voices, which, if it was so, was a charming compliment to receive, for what I can’t endure is that horrible banging in which even pianists of repute so often indulge—a kind of playing that neither pleases the ear nor touches the heart.’

Small A.C.O. Record (Aeolian Co.). G. 15387. 2s. 6d.

Printed Music. Editions of Schubert, Chopin and Mendelssohn abound. Grieg’s *Lyric Pieces* are published by Augener’s.

RECORDS Nos. 2 and 3

Pianoforte Quintet . . . Op. 44 . . . Schumann

THE LONDON STRING QUARTET AND MRS. ETHEL HOBDAY

I have included this work in my list because, firstly, it is a very fine work, and, secondly, it is representative of its composer, and, thirdly, it is rhythmically and vigorously played by the performers named.

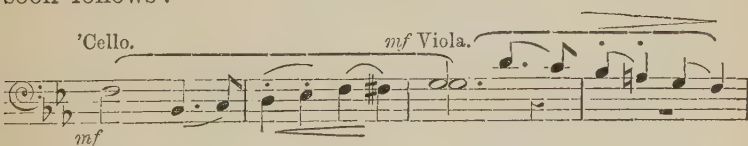
First Movement (*Allegro brillante*).

The *First Subject* is given out at once by all instruments. Note its initial, soaring notes, which constitute the main subject matter of the Quintet:

Allegro brillante.



This First Subject dominates for a while, and then the *Piano* (almost alone) hints at the *Second Subject*, which soon follows:



This was well described in a St. James's Hall programme (1893) as 'a dialogue between the VIOLONCELLO and VIOLA, the second flatly contradicting the first by inverting the melody on every occasion'. (By inversion of a melody, we

mean the turning of all its upward leaps or steps into downward ones, and *vice versa*.)

The PIANO punctuates with repeated chords ; the 'CELLO has the last word, other Strings murmuring acquiescence.

This passage is then repeated, the FIRST VIOLIN adding comments.

The Movement then proceeds according to usual First Movement Form, *i.e.*, the 'Subjects' having now been given out are freely treated (or 'Developed') and then repeated (or 'Recapitulated').

In this Record, however, the Development is shortened and the Recapitulation omitted entirely, the players going straight from their shortened Development to the Coda, or closing passage of the Movement ; as this Coda opens in much the same way as the Recapitulation (*i.e.*, with the first bars of the First Subject) the omission is not very noticable, but, of course, the balance of the work as it now stands involves a loss of effect, and would not please Schumann.

For the sake of readers who wish to follow the players with the score, the omissions may be more exactly stated :

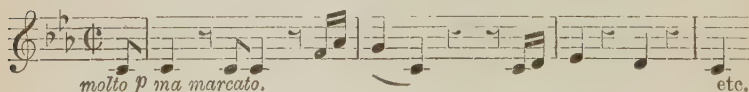
Bars 189-200

Bars 209-315

In other words, nearly one-third of the composition has gone by the board ! There is at least this consolation : what has been sacrificed is more or less of the nature of repetition.

Second Movement (*In modo d'una Marcia ; un poco largamente*
=In the manner of a March ; broad in style).

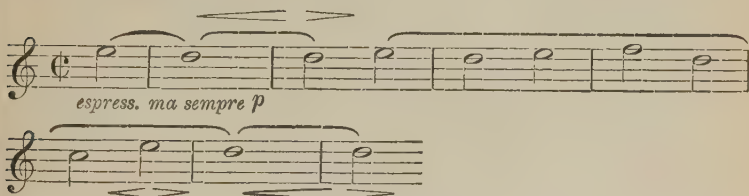
The *First Subject*, steady and march-like in character, as the superscription suggests, is given to the FIRST VIOLIN ;



and is continued in fragments taken successively by SECOND

VIOLIN, FIRST VIOLIN again, VIOLA, and, lastly, VIOLA doubled by FIRST VIOLIN. (This is a good opportunity to note the contrasted tone colours of these instruments and of the last mentioned combination.)

Then comes the *Second Subject*, a simple, sustained melody for FIRST VIOLIN.



Properly the First Subject should then return, but in this Record the repetition is omitted.

We pass to the *Third Subject*, of an agitated character (in the score it is marked *Agitato*). It opens as follows, the PIANO as main protagonist :

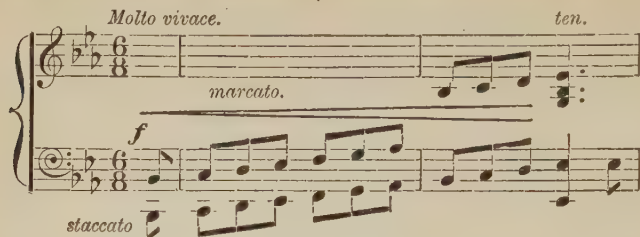


Properly the *Second Subject* should here return, but in this Record it is omitted ; it should be followed by the *First Subject*, but this also is omitted, so that the Movement now ends with a mere brief allusion to it (the actual final bars, as in the score).

For the convenience of readers who like precision, the omitted bars may, again, be specified. They are :

Bars 67-97

Bars 136-191

Third Movement: Scherzo (*Molto vivace*=very lively).

This movement has been described as 'a study in ascending and descending scale passages', and these go on without cessation. A 'Scherzo', literally interpreted, is a 'joke', and this is certainly a very jolly movement.

There are two 'Trios', or alternating Sections. The *First Trio* may be distinguished by a chime-like Tune,



which is repeated many times in 'canon'—i.e., the FIRST VIOLIN starts off, followed (*Three Blind Mice* fashion) by the VIOLA playing the same tune (but an octave lower).

Then comes the *Scherzo* once more.

The *Second Trio* consists of still more rapid figuration, starting in the STRINGS, the PIANO accompanying with chords.



There is then a return to the scale-work of the *Scherzo*, and the piece ends.

The plan of the work, it will be seen is *Scherzo—Trio I.—Scherzo—Trio II.—Scherzo*. The word 'Trio' in this connection is stupid but usual; such alternating sections are so called whatever the number of the instruments which play them.

This Movement is recorded complete.

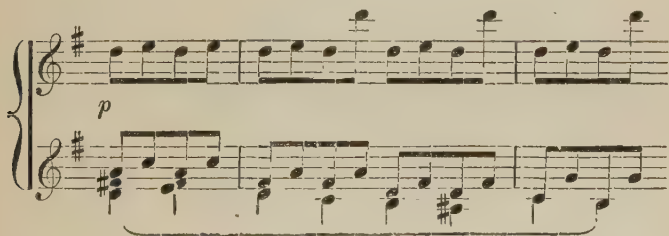
Fourth Movement. (*Allegro ma non troppo* = Quick, but not too quick.)

PIANO, accompanied by tremolo string chords, at once announces the *First Subject*:



a brief emphatic phrase which is repeated and extended.

After a few plucked String chords, comes the *Second Subject*, a smooth phrase, not much longer than the First, started by PIANO and VIOLA, and very soon taken up closely by the other Strings.



These two tunes are in the score elaborated, and then repeated at some length, but unfortunately a good deal of this portion of the Movement is omitted from the present Record.

Then, after big, deliberate chords and a pause, we come to a 'Fugato' (i.e., a passage in which all instruments enter, one after the other, with the same 'Subject'). In this particular 'Fugato', however, there are two simultaneous Subjects—(a) the *First Subject of Movement I.*, in

long notes, started by PIANO, (b) the *First Subject of this last Movement*, in shorter notes, started by PIANO (left hand) doubled by SECOND VIOLIN :



Then the FIRST VIOLIN and 'CELLO enter with (a) and (b) respectively, the VIOLA and FIRST VIOLIN similarly, and so on.

This forms the *Coda* (or 'Tail-piece') and the Quintet very soon comes to an end.

The passage omitted from this Movement is as follows :

Bars 78-250

Schumann's Piano Quintet was written in 1842, when he was thirty-two. This year was with him an active one in the composition of chamber music, for in it he composed also three String Quartets, a Piano Quartet and a Piano Trio.

The Quartet was first performed in January 1843, at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig. The composer's wife played the Piano part. Berlioz was present, and was much impressed.

A general criticism of the Quintet may be in place here. I quote Richard Walthew (*Chamber Music Supplement of The Music Student*, March, 1914), whose bold claims and discreet admissions would probably both be endorsed by every intelligent lover of the work.

'How it appeals to our "advanced" friends, and believers in progress at any price, I am unable to say; possibly the jaded musical palate requires to be titillated by more pungent viands, or else by diet of a very antique and rococo flavour; but, as it is said that the exhausted voluptuary can always relish cold boiled beef, it would not be surprising

if the lusty vigour of Schumann's work might still appeal to even the most "modernistic" of our musicians and critics.

For this Quintet is exceptional in many ways ; it is one of the few works enjoyed equally by the musician and the man in the street ; in this respect it stands almost alone so far as chamber music is concerned, although there is music like Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and a great deal of Wagner which makes the same comprehensive appeal.

Again, so far as the treatment of the instruments is concerned, it is by no means a perfect work ; the purist can point to many instances of excessive and occasionally ineffective doubling of the parts which lends an orchestral tinge to the music at times ; also the writing for the strings is not *felt* in the same way as the piano part is.

But what is all this to weigh against the inherent vitality of the music as a whole ! Grove states in his article on Schumann in the Dictionary that "musicians are still living . . . who at the time of its appearance were in the most susceptible period of youth, and who tell of the indescribable impression the work made upon them. It must have seemed like a new paradise of beauty revealed to their view." One can quite believe it. It is a work that we are inclined to wish we did not know so well, that we might follow its development with the same delighted surprise with which we read for the first time a great work of fiction.

A remarkable aspect of the Quintet is its seeming and no doubt genuine spontaneity in combination with features that analysis would tend to suggest were the result of some hard thinking. The "Free Fantasia"¹ section in the first movement, for instance, is mainly composed of brilliant quaver passages for the piano, arranged in a kind of extended sequence, in a way familiar to Schumann students. Now it does not strike one at once that this quaver figure is simply the third and fourth bars of the first subject treated in diminution, and with such slight alteration of detail as the changing tonality may require.

Again, see the *Finale*, where its principal subject and the opening theme of the first movement are worked together fugally with such masterly ease ; in many modern works of the Liszt school, the themes, with their various transmutations which are intended to bind the sections together, seem, as it were, dragged in by the heels and out of place in their surroundings. Not so in this instance ; nothing can be more natural and at the same time more compelling than the flow of the music in this working out of an artificial device.

Of the Slow Movement it is open to each of us to have his own particular interpretation. But it is undoubtedly elegiac, and the turbulent section in F minor may be taken as giving rein to a passionate revolt against a cruel destiny, whereas the long drawn melody with crotchet

¹ Or 'Development'.

triplet accompaniment on the piano, is expressive of the luxury of grief not untempered by a fatalistic resignation. The first Subject is hardly so introspective, and calls up a vision of a slow moving procession of mourners.'

Two Large Aeolian Vocalion Records. J. 104114-5, each 4s. 6d.

Printed Music. Breitkopf and Härtel, 4s.

RECORD No. 4

Vocal Solos	. . .	}	<i>The Two Grenadiers</i>	.	.	Schumann
			<i>It is enough !</i>	.	.	Mendelssohn
			(From the Oratorio <i>Elijah</i>)			

CLARENCE WHITEHILL

Schumann. *The Two Grenadiers.*

These are two of Napoleon's soldiers, finding their way back from the disastrous Russian campaign. They reach the frontier of France, and learn, to their sorrow, that their Emperor is captured. The words are by Heine. They embody the spirit of Napoleon's glory. Note how, at the end, as the soldier speaker's imagination is fired, the music leaves the minor and goes into the major for the rest of the piece, the excitement at last culminating in a snatch of the Marseillaise.

DIE GRENADIERE.

Nach Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadier',
 Die waren in Russland gefangen.
 Und als sie kamen ins deutsche Quartier,
 Sie liessen die Köpfe hangen.

Da hörten sie beide die traurige Mär':
 Das Frankreich verloren gegangen,
 Besiegt und zerschlagen das grosse Heer,—
 Und der Kaiser, der Kaiser gefangen.

Da weinten zusammen die Grenadier'
 Wohl ob der kläglichen Kunde.
 Der eine sprach: Wie weh wird mir,
 Wie brennt meine alte Wunde!

Der andre sprach: Das Lied ist aus,
 Auch ich möcht' mit dir sterben,
 Doch hab' ich Weib und Kind zu Haus,
 Die ohne mich verderben.

Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind!
 Ich trage weit bessres Verlangen:
 Lass sie betteln gehn, wenn sie hungrig sind,—
 Mein Kaiser, mein Kaiser gefangen!

Gewähr mir Bruder, eine Bitt' :
 Wenn ich jetzt sterben werde,
 So nimm meine Leiche nach Frankreich mit,
 Begrab mich in Frankreichs Erde.
 Das Ehrenkreuz am roten Band
 Sollst du aufs Herz mir legen ;
 Die Flinte gib mir in die Hand,
 Und gürt mir um den Degen.
 So will ich liegen und horchen still,
 Wie eine Schildwach', im Grabe,
 Bis einst ich höre Kanonengebrüll
 Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe.
 Denn reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
 Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen ;
 Dann stieg' ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab,—
 Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen.

THE TWO GRENADIERS.

To France were marching two grenadiers,
 Who long had been prisoners in Russia ;
 They hung their heads as the news reached their ears,
 The day that they entered Prussia.
 For there the sad tidings to them were rehearsed
 That France was by fortune forsaken,
 The great army routed and all dispersed,
 And the Emperor, the Emperor taken.
 Then wept they together, those grenadiers,
 To hear such news on returning ;
 And one said : ' My last hour nears ;
 How sore my old wound is burning !'
 The other said : ' The song is done,
 With you I fain would perish,
 But, should I die, there would be none
 My wife and child to cherish.'
 ' What matters wife or child to me !
 My purpose is not to be shaken.
 Let them go and beg, if they hungry be,
 My Emperor, my Emperor is taken !
 ' But grant me, brother, this one prayer,
 If grief and pain should slay me,
 My body to France you must with you bear,
 In French soil I pray you lay me.

' My iron cross and scarlet band
Near to my heart lay on me,
Then place my musket in my hand,
And gird my sword upon me.

' So shall I wait like a sentry there
And watch for foemen advancing,
Until I hear cannon rending the air
And war-horses neighing and prancing.

' Perchance then my Emp'ror will ride o'er my grave,
And swords will glitter and quiver,
In arms, will I rise to guard and to save
The Emp'ror, the Emp'ror for ever! '

I wanted to give here the actual English translation of the words used by the very singer who has made this Record, so I chose a sharp-eared shorthand writer, and asked her to produce a copy. After a whole morning's work, however, the version remained incomplete, which prompts sad reflections, for, as vocalists go, Mr. Whitehill is supposed to be rather articulate.

I have, therefore, taken the version of Mr. Adam L. Gowans, as given in Messrs. Bayley & Ferguson's second volume of *Baritone Songs*, which will supply a guide to the thought of the poem. And as Gramophone Records of *The Two Grenadiers* abound, some of them reproducing the song in its original German, I give this latter also.

In my opinion, *The Two Grenadiers* were two doting old sentimentalists, full of the very spirit of military glory and mad hero-worship that has through the ages made more sorrow in the world than any other of the errors of mankind. I have no sympathy with the old dodderer who wants his trudging companion to carry one human body and two muskets back to France—though a good deal with his wife and child! But Heine and Schumann have made a good song out of him, so if he ever had existence, I suppose he justified it. (Wagner and others have, by the way, set the same poem.)

Mendelssohn. *It is enough!*

I have personally no desire to include in my book *It is enough*, a piece of vocal pessimism that always depresses me intensely. But many people like to be miserable, and thoroughly enjoy the song. And it is on the back of the Record of the other song, which I do want, so here it is.

As not many readers will take the trouble to turn up their Bibles and recall the setting of the scene in which Elijah breaks forth into his lamentation, the passage is here given :

' And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, " So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time ".

And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree : and he requested for himself that he might die ; and said, "*It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers*".

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, " Arise and eat ".

And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, " Arise and eat ; because the journey is too great for thee ".

And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there ; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, " What doest thou here, Elijah ? "

And he said, "*I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts : for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away*".

And he said " Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord ". And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the

mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake :

And after the earthquake a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice.

And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said " What doest thou here, Elijah ? "

And he said, " I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts : because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away ".

And the Lord said unto him, " Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus : and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria :

And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel : and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay : and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." "

Large H.M.V. Red Record. D.B. 438. 8s. 6d.

Printed Music. Editions of Schumann's Songs and of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* abound.

RECORD No. 5

Pianoforte Solos . . .	{	Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48, No. 1	Chopin
		Etude in G sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 6	Chopin
		Danse Nègre	Cyril Scott
		IRENE SCHARRE	

Chopin. Nocturne in C minor.

This is one of Chopin's finest Nocturnes, and very finely does Miss Scharre play it, never descending into sentimentality, nor seeking originality in distortion.

It opens with an appealing melody, in the minor. Then comes a solemn, hymn-like tune in the major, at first given out simply and soberly, but soon broken into by interpolated rushes of double octave scales in rapid triplet groups. Finally the opening minor melody returns, but much amplified in its accompaniment.

Of Chopin's gift for amplification and decoration this piece is, indeed, an admirable example. Note his varied treatment of the initial idea :

Lento.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody in the right hand is marked 'mezza voce.' and the accompaniment in the left hand features a series of chords and single notes. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment, with the melody marked 'etc.' and the accompaniment marked 'Ped.' and '*'.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Chopin's Nocturne in C Minor. The first system consists of a piano (treble) staff and a bass staff. The piano staff begins with a series of chords and a melodic line, ending with the word "etc.". The bass staff features a series of chords with pedaling markings: "Ped.", "*", "Ped.", "*", "Ped.", "*", "Ped.", and "*". The second system also has a piano and bass staff. The piano staff includes triplets marked with "3" and the instruction "pp agitato," followed by "simile.". The bass staff continues with triplets and pedaling markings: "Ped.", "*", "Ped.", "*", "Ped.", "Ped.", and "*".

In the opening section the piece has the true Nocturne character—gentle, gracefully sentimental, tinged with melancholy.

The middle portion opens in much the same quiet manner, but whereas the first section suggested languor and complaint, this section suggests consolation and confidence. Soon, indeed, it passes beyond this and, when the rushing interpolated passages already referred to are heard, rises to the higher plane of the heroic.

The greater energy here introduced does not subside, the initial theme, when it reappears, maintaining by the restless triplet accompaniment that has now become part of it the spirit of vigour and of determination. Only at the very end of the piece do simplicity and quietude return.

This is, then, more than a Nocturne. Mr. Ashton Jonson¹, with propriety, calls it 'almost a Ballade'.

¹ *Handbook to Chopin's Works* (William Reeves, 8s. 6d.), a very useful book.

It seems strange that there should exist any difference of opinion as to the value of this work. The American critic Huneker says :

‘ This is the noblest Nocturne of them all. Biggest in conception, it seems a miniature music drama.’

Kullak (quoted by Mr. Jonson) says :

‘ The design and poetic contents of this Nocturne make it the most important one that Chopin created ; the chief subject is a masterly expression of a great powerful grief, for instance at a grave misfortune occurring to one’s beloved fatherland. Upon such an occasion and in such a mood, it is but a step to self-sacrificing deeds. The second subject makes upon me an impression as if heroic men had banded themselves together and solemnly went forth to the holy war to conquer or die for their native land.

‘ In correspondence with the character of a grand heroic march, the harmonic masses finally tower aloft in imposing splendour and majesty.’

The late Professor Niecks, whose magnificent two-volume *Life of Chopin* (Novello, 16s.) is our standard work on the subject, says (Vol. II, page 265) :

‘ The two Nocturnes (in C minor and C sharp minor) which form Op. 48 are not of the number of those that occupy foremost places amongst their companions. Still, they need not be despised. The melody of the C minor portion of the first is very expressive, and the second has in the C sharp minor portion the peculiar Chopinesque *flebile dolcezza*.

‘ In playing these nocturnes there occurred to me a remark of Schumann’s, made when he reviewed some nocturnes by Count Wielhorski. He said, on that occasion, that the quicker middle movements which Chopin frequently introduces into his nocturnes are often weaker than his first conceptions, meaning the first portions of the nocturnes. Now although the middle parts in the present instances are, on the contrary, slower movements, yet the judgment holds good ; at least with respect to the first nocturne, the middle part of which has nothing to recommend it but the effective use of a full and sonorous instrumentation, if I may use this word in speaking of one instrument.’

It may be added that Niecks speaks of the Chopin Nocturnes in general as ‘dulcet, effeminate compositions’, which some of them do certainly tend to become when played with exaggerated feeling.

The following extract from an estimate of Chopin’s influence upon piano composition, by Mr. Tobias Matthay

(*Musical Times*, March, 1919), is of interest as bearing upon the style of this Nocturne:

'What we have to thank him most for is the deep poetic feeling underlying all his music. Except in his very earliest work we never find him writing a passage for the mere sound of it, or the mere playing of it. However brilliant the run of sounds, they are always written as a direct and inevitable expression of his mood or feeling. It is because he never swerved from this, his ever present purpose to express feeling through the most skilfully beautiful, that he became and has remained the greatest pianoforte writer, and that his music will forever glorify our instrument.'

If following this piece with the score, note that, in order to bring it within the compass of a Gramophone Record, it has been (skilfully) 'cut' in two places. The omitted passages are Bars 31-8 and Bars 55-66—in all twenty bars out of the seventy-seven of the piece.

Chopin. *Etude*.

This is a true 'study', its technical object being the cultivation of the playing of double notes in the right hand; from beginning to end that hand is active in the rapid drawing of parallel lines, a third apart. Sometimes the left hand supplies a mere accompaniment to this; at other times it treats a definite *motif* of its own—usually a snatch of melody thickened with chords.

Huneker praises the piece as follows:

'In piano literature no more remarkable merging of matter and manner exists. The end justifies the means, and the means employed by the composer are beautiful. There is no other word to describe the style and architectonics of this noble study.'

which, though perhaps excessive, is, at any rate, less irritating than the typically Hunekerian phraseology in the description of the set of twelve, which make up the Opus 25, from which this one is taken:

'The Chopin studies are exemplary essays in emotion and manner.'

Cyril Scott. *Danse Nègre*.

This light-handed piece is a part of the composer's Opus 58, the other members of this opus being the *Three Little Waltzes* and the *Two Alpine Sketches* (published by Elkin).

Why *Danse Nègre*, instead of *Negro Dance*, I do not know; many of our composers seem to have an affection, or affectation, for French titles for their lighter pieces (compare Elgar's use of *Salut d'amour*, instead of *Love's Greeting*). Cyril Scott has another *Danse Nègre* in his *Tallahassee Suite* for Violin and Piano, so one suspects that he thinks 'Negro Dance' too vulgar a title for the drawing room, a view which his friend and admirer Percy Grainger, with his *Molly on the Shore* and *Handel in the Strand*, would hardly share.

This, however, is all by the way, and the observation is made here merely in order to fill out a paragraph about a piece of which nothing calls to be said—except perhaps this: Don't play it too much, or, pleasant as it is, it will pall. It is included in this book because it happens to be given in with two Chopin pieces, and it is worth its place, as occupying half of one side of a record, and as illustrating one of the lighter moods of a popular contemporary composer of our own country.

Large H.M.V. Black Record. D. 84. 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Editions of Chopin abound. The Cyril Scott piece is published by Messrs. Elkin. 2s.

RECORDS Nos. 6, 7 and 8

Violin and Pianoforte . *Sonata in D minor, Op. 103* . . . Brahms

CATTERALL AND MURDOCH

First Movement (*Allegro*=Quick).

The Sonata opens very finely, with its best Movement, the Opening Subject of which is deeply felt and is carried forward in a long continuous Violin line against an effective Piano background. Both instruments are here supplied with material supremely adapted to their genius. Note especially the Violin part, as a piece of curvilinear drawing, all growing out of its opening in the most natural and organic way :

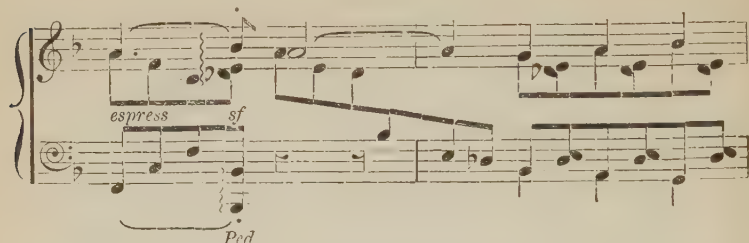
Allegro.

p sotto voce ma espressivo.

pp

This is the *First Subject* of the Movement ; it has a

syncopated accompaniment. The *Second Subject*, by and by, enters, at first in PIANO alone :



Of this Mr. Fuller-Maitland remarks :

'One of its peculiarities is the *sforzando* note in an unexpected part of the bar, a passage to which very few players, by the way, know how to give the exact value, some of them avoiding the emphasis altogether, and some overdoing it. The effect is at its best if the smallest imaginable break be made after it, in fact if more attention be paid to the staccato mark than to the *sf*.'¹

This *sforzando* effect (*i.e.*, the effect of an accent upon the chord marked *sf*) occurs three times in the opening few bars of the Subject, and is, as Mr. Fuller-Maitland suggests, one of its features. The listener may judge for himself into which of the two faults mentioned (if either) the pianist here and the violinist a moment later have fallen.

After a time the composer embarks upon a remarkable passage entirely built upon a 'Pedal', that is a stationary note (in this case A—the Dominant) in the bass; the matter superposed is all derived from the First Subject, and this is technically the Development of the Movement. There are nearly fifty bars of this 'Dominant Pedal' passage. In Brahms' *German Requiem* a whole chorus is constructed upon a Pedal; here the whole middle portion, or *Development*, of a Movement in 'Sonata Form' is so constituted—both instances being, at the time of their composition, unique.

The turn of the Record occurs as this Development portion ends, and we enter upon the *Recapitulation*, which, as usual, gives us the two Subjects (in the Enunciation, or

¹ *Brahms* (Methuen, 1911. 10s. 6d.).

opening section, the Subjects were, respectively in keys D minor and F major; in the Recapitulation they are in D minor and D major).

A *Coda*, or closing section, is closely modelled upon the Development, and consists almost entirely of twenty bars of Tonic Pedal (*i.e.*, the Keynote stands firm in the bass, as the fifth note of the key previously did).

Second Movement (*Adagio*—Slow).

This is, in the present writer's opinion, the weakest of the four Movements. He is prepared to hear that some listeners like it, at first hearing, the best, but believes that after repeated hearings of the whole work most of them will come round to his opinion.

There is not in this Movement the depth of the First Movement. Its melodies are more facile, its harmonies less original. It makes a good little popular Violin and Piano piece, but is not entirely in place in this Sonata. Its main Subject resembles that of the Slow Movement of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, but is not so exalted. As supporting their contrary view, some listeners may care to note Fuller-Maitland :

'The slow movement is of rare directness and simplicity of structure, though it deals with great emotional passion.'

The Movement opens with a *Subject* in the major which comes with pleasant comfort after the preceding Movement in the minor :

The musical score is written for three staves. The first two systems use a single treble staff, while the third system uses a grand staff (treble and bass). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system is marked *espress.* and the third system is marked *p legato.* The music features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and a harmonic accompaniment. There are several phrasing slurs and accents throughout the passage.

After this passage has run its course, we hear another, the *Second Subject*, opening :



Then the *First Subject* returns again, with the Violin melody transposed an octave higher, and the Piano accompaniment elaborated.

The *Second Subject* then also returns, transposed into another key, and with a further passing reference to the *First Subject*, the Movement ends.

Third Movement (*Un poco presto e con sentimento* = pretty quick, and with feeling).

This is, though not so called in the score, a Scherzo, but it is a rather wistful one. It abounds in energy, but finds time for thought as it proceeds.

Its *Main Subject* is heard at once ; the Piano has the tune, the Violin merely accompanying.

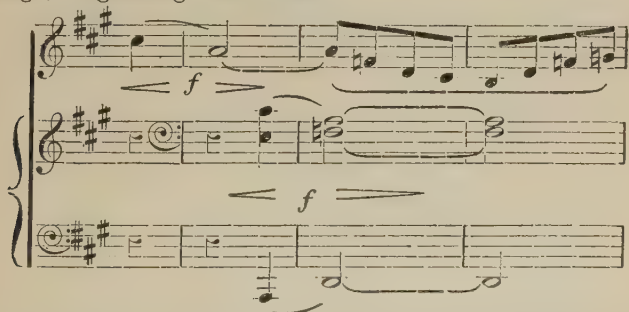
Un poco presto è con sentimento.

Of this passage as shown above, Thomas F. Dunhill remarks :

' A most unusual effect is here obtained by giving the actual bass, with the harmonies, to the violin, whilst the piano plays the theme. It is so delicately constructed and perfectly balanced that the result is delightful, but in less expert hands such a distribution of parts would be exceedingly risky.'¹

Lower down the page the rôles of solo and accompaniment are reversed.

This section of the piece is ended by a short *Codetta* passage, beginning as follows :

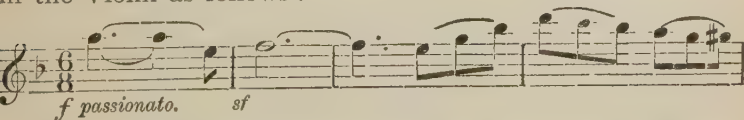


There follows a *Middle Section*, which might be described as of the nature of Development of the Main Subject, and a final section which reflects that Subject.

Fourth Movement (*Presto agitato* = Rapid and agitated).

This is a very vigorous movement. It is a Rondo, that is to say its main feature is a Main Subject which returns from time to time.

After four bars of introductory matter, in which the PIANO hints at the coming *Subject* and the VIOLIN adds force by energetically filling in the harmonies between the two hands of the pianist, the *Main Subject* itself enters in the Violin as follows :



¹ *Chamber Music, a Treatise for Students*. 1913 (Macmillan and Stainer & Bell. 12s. 6d.).

Other passages of importance throughout the piece open as follows :

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff is for the Piano, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an *espress.* (expressive) marking. It features a series of chords and single notes, some beamed together. The middle staff is for the Violin, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic, showing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is for the Piano (Piano), marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and *f non legato.* (forte non legato). It consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) showing a complex, flowing melodic and harmonic texture with many beamed notes.

(This last occurs at the turn of the Record.)

As a preliminary to solid enjoyment of the Movement, go through it, noting all these passages of Subject matter as often as they occur, and becoming familiar with them.

Then the *Main Subject* returns and the Movement ends.

Three Large Columbia Light Blue Records. L. 1535-6-7. 7s. 6d.

Printed Music. Augener, 8s.

RECORD No. 9

Vocal Solos . .	{	<i>Feldeinsamkeit</i> (Country Solitude)	. . .	Brahms
		<i>Ständchen</i> (Serenade)		Strauss

GERHARDT

Brahms. *Feldeinsamkeit.*

This is a quiet song, somewhat of the more reflective Schubert type. It is beautifully sung.

Ich ruhe still im hohen, grünen Gras
Und sende lange meinen Blick nach oben,
Von Grillen rings umschwirrt ohn' Unterlass,
Von Himmelsbläue wundersam umwoben.

Die schönen weissen Wolken zieh'n dahin
Durch's tiefe Blau, wie schöne, stille Träume;
Mir ist, als ob ich längst gestorben bin
Und ziehe selig mit durch ew'ge Räume.

COUNTRY SOLITUDE.

Where noonday sleeps upon the grassy hill
I lie and watch the boundless blue above me;
The whirr of tiny wings is never still,
The sunlit skies to wondrous visions move me.

As o'er me float, along the azure dome,
The fair white clouds, like dreamland's silent legions,
My spirit seeks again its long-lost home,
And floats with them through heaven's eternal regions.

The original words are by Hermann Almers, the English by Paul England. Both are given here by kind permission of Messrs. Alfred Lengnick & Co. Ltd.

Whilst this book is in the proof stage a friend who has been reading it reminds me how often *Feldeinsamkeit* is used as an illustration in Plunket Greene's *Interpretation in Song*¹—the best book upon singing in the English (or perhaps any) language. There are in the index no fewer than ten references to this one song, and I propose to quote

¹ Macmillan and Stainer & Bell. 7s. 6d. (Passages quoted by permission of the publishers.)

some of the passages concerning it, because I think that in that way I shall offer gramophonists a practical means of acquiring a little of the art of criticism, as applied to singing.

Under the head of the singer's 'Equipment', Greene talks of 'Magnetism'—'the indefinable something which passes from singer to audience and audience to singer alike'. He discusses late-comers and early-goers and other destroyers of 'Magnetism', and concludes :

'One fact emerges from all this, that to Magnetism the most important medium for good or evil is the eye. To the singer the roving eye in an audience is as terrible a danger-signal as the early yawn. If all eyes are on him he knows he is all right. If they wander by, taking him casually on their way, he is probably all wrong, and equally probably it is his own fault. If they are fixed upon him and leave him with a jump, the fault is generally the late-comer's. In either case, no matter whose the fault, his work is of no account.

'What then can the singer do to help the eye, Magnetism's best friend? He can see that that friend is not employed elsewhere, and be ready to throw the door open should Magnetism look in, after its wont, through the keyhole. The eye that is fixed upon the printed page is no good to it. No amount of make-believe on a London November day could conjure up the blue skies and white clouds of the midsummer of *Feldeinsamkeit* while the singer's head was bobbing up and down from the vocal score. He wants his eyes for something else, not only to visualise his picture, to look out *unconsciously*—for the eye follows the mind as unconsciously as the hand follows the eye—to those green fields and summer skies, but to gather from, and give back to, his audience that indescribable magnetic sympathy, communicable as much by the eye as by the clapping of hands, which makes them both friends, coaxes away the terrors of nervousness and sets the light to his imagination.'

All this is very true, and explains its author's habit of singing without music or words in his hands. The whole question of the power of the eye in musical performance is very interesting and worth discussion. The pianist and violinist cannot exercise that power, and in Gramophone and Broadcast reproduction it becomes impossible. My personal opinion, from some experience of public speaking and lecturing, is that whatever the audience may gain from eye-contact with the performer, the advantages of the performer from eye-contact with the audience is even

greater. Under the head of the 'Singer's Sense of Atmosphere', Mr. Greene says :

'If his imagination can show him the atmosphere, the mood follows of itself. In Brahms's *Feldeinsamkeit*, for instance, the *atmosphere* is one of dreamy happiness, of utter contentment mental and physical; the *mood* one of laziness, of half-closed eyes, of some one hypnotised by the hum of bees and drugged with the scent of flowers. Given that mood, the song sings itself. It tells, it is true, of long green grass, of the ceaseless hum of insects, of blue skies and white clouds like floating dreams, but the singer does not think of them. They are details; they simply contribute to the *atmosphere* of the song as a whole. He tells you of his *mood*—"as though he long were dead and borne along to heaven"—happy, lazy, half asleep. Let him but accentuate the detail or worry over his technique, and the skies will turn to thunderstorms, the bumble-bees to mosquitoes and the white clouds to water-spouts.'

Later, in the same discussion, he speaks of the signpost, 'one sentence or phrase, generally in music and words alike', which, as the singer grows into intimacy with the song, 'will begin to stand out, to impress itself upon him as typical of the atmosphere of the whole, a guide to the whole mood', and this he calls the 'master-phrase'.

In *Feldeinsamkeit* the obvious master-phrase is in the last line already referred to.

'I feel as though I long were dead and borne along to heaven.'

(The translation from which the author is quoting is, of course, a different one from that quoted above.)

It will be remembered that Mr. Greene gives three 'Main Rules' for the singer, the first of which is *Never stop the 'march' of a song.*

'True rhythm is inexorable; true rhythm is compelling; true rhythm is ever on the move and ever in a straight line. Nothing can stand before it; everything must clear out of its way. Its motto is "Push on!" No singer could, or should, sing such instrumental accents as these, but the feeling of their rhythm should be in his blood, and "Push on!" should be written in letters of fire in his brain, for it is the secret of singing of every song, big or little, fast or slow; be it as harassed as *The Erlking*, or as lazy as *Feldeinsamkeit*, it pushes on in a straight line to its goal, inevitably. It is this principle of the straight line which makes fine phrasing, and the sense of inevitableness which gives the impression of style.'

In further discussion of the same rule he speaks of the liberty in 'interpretation' that has been earned by the singer who has gained the power 'to phrase in large'— 'Saturated with rhythm as he is, he may spread out, or narrow in, any phrase, or any part of any phrase, anywhere, to any extent, at any time he likes'.

'He is the sole judge. He knows that thereby he will not only heighten the emotional expression, but actually enhance the charm of the rhythm. Take, for example, the following passage from *Feldeinsamkeit*:



'If the whole phrase be sung in one up to X (the end of the first "nach oben"), then the subsequent "nach oben" can be, and should be, lengthened out with a distinct *ritardando* and *diminuendo* in order to give the feeling of laziness and absence of worry. Both words and music demand such a broadening or "lazing" of the phrase; the voice fades off into a sleepy whisper, while the accompanist plays as though his fingers could not keep their eyes open any longer! The original rhythm, after its rest, starts then afresh with an even greater charm than it had before. Let, however, a pause be made at XX (as is practically invariable) for breathing purposes. The familiar gulp destroys the illusion. The sleepy eye lights up with a horror of rain, or at the thought that a pipe is not much good when the matches have been left behind. After such a perceptible breaking of the *sense* of the phrase, the subsequent *ritardando* will mean not laziness but boredom, and will convey that impression to the audience.'

Under 'Prosody and Metre' the phrase just quoted is again used as an illustration. He is speaking of cases where, in a rising phrase, 'a climax happens to fall upon an insignificant word or short foot', and has to admit 'so much the worse for the word! The music's the thing, and the *crescendo* has the first call; so prosody must go. This is so instinctively recognised that the most fanatical prosody-purist feels no resentment'. An example of the

principle is given, from Schubert's *Du bist die Ruh*, and the passage continues :

'The phrase quoted earlier from Brahms's *Feldeinsamkeit* also illustrates it. Here the words "sēndě", "lāngě", "ōběn", can be, and should be, sung with their speech-values ; but the *nen* of "mēiněn", though quite short in itself, is by sheer force of the rising phrase promoted to an even more important position than its long-footed brother, that short step up of two notes in the social scale causing it to turn its back on its friends of trochaic days.'

In the chapter upon 'The Classification of Songs', *Feldeinsamkeit* is put into the category of the *Atmospheric*.

'The word "atmospheric" does not necessarily imply anything to do with the weather, or that other songs have not atmosphere, but that these depend upon atmosphere as their dominating characteristic Atmospheric songs are rare, but by far the most subtle and interesting of all song-literature.'

Feldeinsamkeit, says the author, is not merely 'atmospheric', it is 'purely atmospheric—just a dream picture of blue skies and summer fields and drowsy happiness', whereas, 'in Vaughan Williams' setting of Rossetti's *Silent Noon* [classed amongst "Songs of Reminiscence"] not only have we the blue skies and green fields and the dragon-flies and the hot summer day, but the whole song throbs with the love of a man for a woman on that day *in the past, told us to-day*'.

Lastly, in 'How to Study a Song', the author alludes to the rhythmic impulse of *rubatos* and their subsequent *tempo primos* :

'Many of these *rubatos* have been written by the composer in his usual form (by a *ritardando* with no instructions as to the return of the *tempo primo*) ; but the most powerful of all are the turns with the implied push or *tenuto* on the note immediately succeeding them. There are fast and slow turns in music of which the latter are almost somnolent in their peacefulness (*vide* Brahms's *Feldeinsamkeit*).'

It has taken a good deal of space to give all these quotations, but I am satisfied that some readers will be interested to have them, and to study Gerhardt's interpretation in the light of the views of another great interpreter.

Strauss. *Ständchen.*

Mach' auf, mach' auf, doch leise mein Kind,
 Um Keinen vom Schlummer zu wecken,
 Kaum murmelt der Bach, kaum zittert im Wind
 Ein Blatt an den Büschen und Hecken.
 D'rum leise mein Mädchen, das nichts sich regt,
 Nur leise die Hand auf die Klinke gelegt.
 Mit Tritten, wie Tritte der Elfen so sacht,
 Um über die Blumen zu hüpfen,
 Flieg leicht hinaus in die Mondscheinnacht
 Zu mir in den Garten zu schlüpfen.
 Rings schlummern die Blüthen am rieselnden Bach
 Und duften im Schlaf, nur die Liebe ist wach.
 Sitz' nieder, hier dämmert geheimnissvoll
 Unter den Lindenbäumen,
 Die Nachtigall uns zu Häupten,
 Soll von uns'ren Küssen träumen,
 Und die Rose, wenn sie am Morgen erwacht,
 Hoch glühn von den Woneschauern der Nacht.

—A. F. von Schack.

FREE TRANSLATION.

O, open the door, but gently, my love,
 That no one from slumber may stir.
 The brook murmurs gently, the wind moves above,
 Yet scarce rustles the poplar and fir.
 So gently, dear maiden, that no ear may catch
 Your foot on the floor, or your hand on the latch.
 With fairy-like footsteps, quick-tripping and light,
 Pass over the daisy-strewn lawn.
 From star-spangled heaven the moon shines so bright.
 There's many an hour yet e'er dawn.
 The blossoms droop slumberous on bush and in brake,
 All nature is sleeping—love alone is awake.
 Here sit, then, in silence, your hand in my own.
 Concealed by the leaves of the lime.
 The nightingale sings in the branches alone,
 Like us, moved by passion sublime.
 The roses around us, when darkness has fled,
 With sweet understanding will blush pink and red.

—P. A. S.

Large Aeolian Vocalian Red Record. C. 01094, 4s. 6d.

Printed Music. *Feldeinsamkeit*, Lengnick, 2s. ; *Ständchen*, Bosworth, 2s.

RECORD No. 10

Orchestral Piece . . . *Siegfried's Funeral March* . . . Wagner
(From *The Dusk of the Gods*)

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Sir Landon Ronald)

It seems hardly necessary to say much about the position of this moving piece of funeral music in the drama from which it is taken. The hero, upon a hunting expedition, has been treacherously slain by his enemy, and you are to imagine his body being sadly carried by his companions through the forest and over the mountain to the house he has that morning left—where it will be consumed with fire.

This is the Record alluded to in the Introduction to this book as excellent material for a study of orchestration.

The orchestra used is a very large one; we have here the full Wagnerian force. It consists of:

- (a) STRINGS as usual.
- (b) WOOD WIND—3 Flutes and Piccolo; 3 Oboes, Cor Anglais and 3 Bassoons; 3 Clarinets and Bass Clarinet, 4 Horns.
(I have classed the Horns as 'Wood' here, because of the arrangement of this particular score.)
- (c) BRASS—3 Trumpets and Bass Trumpet; 4 Trombones; 4 Tubas and Contra-bass Tuba.
- (d) PERCUSSION—4 Kettledrums and Tenor Drum; Triangle and Cymbals.
- (e) 6 Harps.

Now with real stupidity the publishers of these scores tumble things as though it were their purpose to make things difficult for the amateurs on whose purchases they nevertheless so largely depend. Mr. Adrian Boult, in a recent lecture on score-reading, suggested that the bar-lines ought not to run continuously from top to bottom of the page, but be broken between the different groups of

instruments. The Carnegie Trustees have had Vaughan Williams' *London Symphony* and Bantock's *Hebridean Symphony* so printed, and Scriabin's *Prometheus* (but not his *Ecstasy*) has the same advantage. Your score is probably one of the foolish old-fashioned muddles, but you can clear it up wonderfully by ruling a thick pencil line (or, better still, a red ink line) underneath the lowest Wood and the lowest Brass instrument on every page, for these lines will prove to be very useful guides to your unaccustomed eye.

Next, make up your mind that you are not (at this stage, at any rate) to attempt to read your score as a conductor does ; you are merely to use it as a guide-book to intelligent listening. Thus you can safely put on one side all puzzles such as why varying key signatures are used for the different instruments ; indeed, if you notice these signatures at all, you should use them merely as landmarks—for instance, the Clarinets are in a key of their own which enables you quickly to spot their position in the score, and the Horns and Trumpets are in the open key throughout, which helps you to recognise them more quickly.

There is just one further little matter that may trouble you. These miniature scores are unfortunately still German productions, and a few of the instruments are given names that differ so much from the English names that if you are not at least an elementary German scholar you may not easily guess at their meaning. The following little list will, however, help you out of this difficulty :

- Becken* = Cymbals ;
- Englisches Horn* = Cor anglais ;
- Grosse Flöte* = Flute ;
- Kleine Flöte* = Piccolo ;
- Pauken* = Kettledrums ;
- Bratschen* = Violas ;
- Harfe* = Harp ;
- Posaune* = Trombone ;
- Rührtrommel* = Tenor Drum.

Now put the Record on the instrument and begin. Slow down the motor a little at first, so that you may have time to teach your eye to jump from line to line of the score, and to realise which instrument, or group or combination of instruments, has, for the moment, the leading part. This slowing down, of course lowers the pitch, and hence somewhat alters the effects of the various instruments; still it will for a little time be desirable.

Sit beside the instrument with the score on a table, in such a position that you can stop and re-start the motor a dozen times in two minutes, if necessary, without making a labour of it. Whenever you come to a passage where any particular instrument or combination is especially clearly heard (and this piece is full of such passages) play it over and over again, looking closely at the score, and associating eye and ear in their respective perception of general notational appearance and tonal effect. As soon as you feel it to be wise, put back the *tempo* indicator to the proper figure (about 82 on my own gramophone). You are now fairly started in your study, and from this one score and this one (double-sided) Record can learn a great deal of what you want to know.

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

I propose now to go right through the score with you, noting in some detail the orchestral effects. Observe that any economical reader who has grudged two shillings for thirty pages of Wagner orchestration can, with my list alone, follow his Record very satisfactorily; to be sure, the bars are not numbered on the Record, as you would naturally number them in the score before opening operations, but I have worded my indications as descriptively as was consistent with concision and everything mentioned can be pretty easily traced. Here, then, is my Muirhead (we no longer mention Baedeker) to *Siegfried's Funeral March*.

Bars¹

- 1 & 2 KETTLEDRUMS alone.
- 3 VIOLAS and 'CELLOS enter with a low chromatic wail.
- 4-7 HORNS and TUBAS alone in unisons and octaves.
- 8 KETTLEDRUMS and chromatic wail again.
- 9-12 Similar unison and octave passages to 4-7, but given to BASSOONS, CLARINET and BASS CLARINET.
- 12-14 KETTLEDRUMS.
- 14-15 LOWER STRINGS, *staccato*.
- 16-18 Loud detached barks on LOWER BRASS, with KETTLEDRUMS, whilst WOOD WIND hold long chords; LOWER STRINGS have their chromatic wail.
- 19-22 The 4 TUBAS and BASS TUBA, beginning softly and working up to the most thrilling *fortissimo*, cry out a wonderful passage of intense grief. At the climax TROMBONES and HORNS join in.
- 23-25 Similar to 16-18.
- 26-30 TRUMPETS, BASS TRUMPET and TUBAS, with a background of tremolo chords on the lower Strings.
- 30-36 A little bit of plaintive melody is taken up in turn by (1) COR ANGLAIS, (2) CLARINET, and (3) OBOE doubled by HORN. At 34 the HARP has a soft arpeggio, followed by a *pianissimo* chord.
- 36-40 Need not be particularly described.
- 41-44 A swelling, piercing tune on TRUMPET, with nearly full Orchestra accompanying.
(Here this side of the Record ends.)

¹ At the opening the speed is so slow that a bar lasts a long time. From bar 16 onwards, a steady march rhythm begins.

- 45-47 FULL ORCHESTRA *fortissimo*, yet dominated by the smallest instrument of all—the PICCOLO.
- 48-51 BASS TRUMPET tune, doubled by HORNS.
- 51-53 Similar to 45-47.
- 54-60 Similar in orchestration and material to previous passages.
- 61-62 A noble passage for full BRASS (easily recognised by its characteristic triplets).
- 63-64 FULL ORCHESTRA.
- 64-71 A melody on CLARINETS doubled by COR ANGLAIS. Touches of HARP can be heard, as also the chromatic LOWER-STRING wail.
- 71-72 WOOD WIND chords, with the wail continuing.
- 73-75 BASS TRUMPET melody again.
- 75-77 A tune in four-part harmony on the HORNS.
- 79-83 The piece dies away to its conclusion—the wail on the Strings and soft-toned chords on Trombones and Tubas.

There is also a Columbia Record of the piece, made by Hamilton Harty and the Hallé Orchestra. I consider it much inferior in tone and in interpretation to the H.M.V. Record, which I look upon as one of the best orchestral Records at present on the market.

Large H.M.V. Black Record. D. 502. 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Miniature Full Score of *The Dusk of the Gods*, 40s. (Goodwin & Tabb); Miniature Full Score of the *Funeral March*, 1s. 6d.; Piano-Vocal Score of the Opera, 11s. (Feldman),

RECORDS Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15

Symphony No. 5, in E minor, *From the New World*, Op. 95. Dvorak

THE HALLÉ ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Hamilton Harty)

or

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Sir Landon Ronald)

For three years of his life (1892-5) Dvorak lived in America, where he acted as Director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. His residence there affected his composition. He who had, as a Czech composer, been greatly influenced by Czech folk-tune, began to consider the case of the poor American composer, who had no national folk-tune. In the *Century Magazine*, during the last year of his stay, he wrote :

‘A while ago I suggested that inspiration for truly national music might be derived from the Negro melodies or Indian chants.

‘I was led to take the view partly by the fact that the so-called plantation songs are indeed the most striking and appealing melodies that have been found on this side of the water, but largely by observation that this seems to be recognised, though often unconsciously, by most Americans.

‘All races have their distinctive national songs which they at once recognise as their own, even if they have never heard them before. It is a proper question to ask, what songs, then, belong to the American and appeal more strikingly to him than any others? What melody would stop him on the street if he were in a strange land, and make the home feeling well-up within him, no matter how hardened he might be or how wretchedly the tunes were played?

‘Their number, to be sure, seems to be limited. The most potent, as well as the most beautiful amongst them, according to my estimation, are certain of the so-called plantation melodies and slave-songs, all of which are distinguished by unusual and subtle harmonies, the thing which I have found in no other songs but those of Scotland and Ireland.’

(The word ‘Harmonies’ above is unfortunate; either it represents a mis-translation, for it seems unlikely that Dvorak actually wrote in English, or it is used in the curiously vague sense of the poets.)

Then the HORNS give a one-note call. A FLUTE, influenced by the 'CELLOS' pessimism, repeats the tragic whisper in its girlish treble, and two OBOES reproduce meanwhile the accompaniment formerly taken by the Violas and Double Basses, a Bassoon adding a touch of bass at the end.

Then, with all their force, the whole body of STRINGS make themselves heard, taking as their matter a little three-note *motif* from the mystery-whisper just heard, and crying it on the housetops. KETTLEDRUMS (their rhythm not quite clearly to be perceived, in gramophonic reproduction) thunder a rat-tat-tap and WOOD WIND and HORNS strike in with a sympathetic chord. Three or four times this alternation of Strings, Kettledrums and Wood Wind is heard, and then these leave the task of lament for a moment to the 'CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES, who close the passage with a two-bar melody in a low region of their compass.

The FLUTES and OBOES interpose, with a querulous complaint, given out in parallel lines six notes apart, the lower Strings and Bassoons maintaining a chord underneath it.

Then 'CELLOS, VIOLAS and HORNS introduce their bolder thought :



The FLUTE-OBOE querulousness and the VIOLA-'CELLO-HORN boldness answer one another again, and then the FULL ORCHESTRA snaps four times and bursts into a roar, which finally eases its mind, so that, with a high tremolo Violin note as prelude, we burst at last into the more wholesome atmosphere of the

First Movement (*Allegro molto* = Very lively).

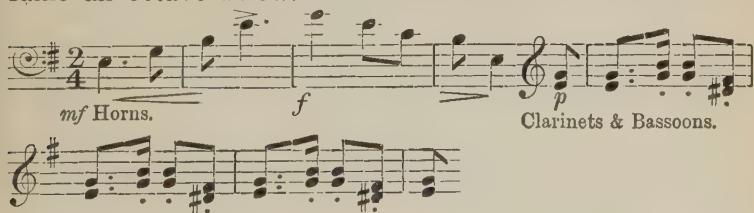
Before we hear this we may for a moment consider the psychological purport of the Introduction we have just heard. It differs in mood from anything which follows.

The Symphony as a whole is by turns robust, gay, humorous, thoughtful, plaintive—but not tragic. It might, then, almost be said that this Introduction is out of sympathy with the work it introduces, but a better suggestion, if it is not too imaginative, is that it represents a spirit of despair, quickly trampled underfoot by a healthy nature.

Compare the Introduction to Tchaikovsky's *Pathetic Symphony*. It is equally despairing, but in this case despair is the mood of the Movement to follow and indeed (despite relief in the middle movements) of the work as a whole.

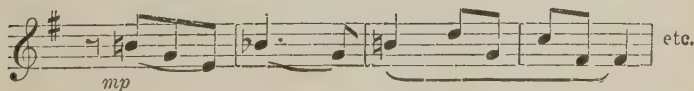
As the *New World's* First Movement proper opens the tragic mood is almost but not quite vanquished, the sky is no longer stormy, but a few wisps of cloud drift across it still. Loud complaint or whispered sorrow have gone, or have softened down into a feeling of mild regret which just colours the Movement in places.

The Opening Theme seems to be a transformation of a theme already heard, for it opens with a HORN phrase which, in general curve and rhythm, resembles the last-quoted theme, and then tacks on to this a vigorous balancing phrase, given to the two Clarinets and the two Bassoons, Clarinets playing in parallel thirds, and Bassoons doing the same an octave below.



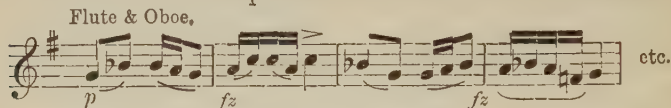
This is the *First Subject* and the chief theme of the Movement, and for some little time treatment of it keeps the Composer busy.

The next tune to enter is this, in SECOND VIOLINS :



I give it here for completeness' sake, but, alas, in both H.M.V. and Columbia Records it is almost lost under its accompanying parts.

Next enters one of the pleasantest tunes of the Movement:

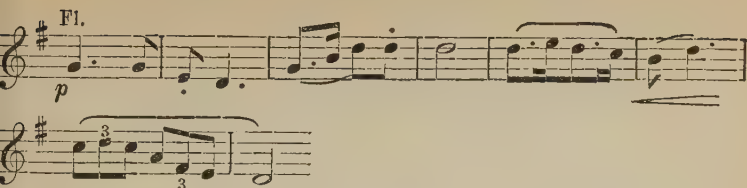


Its insouciance exhibits it as an example of the spirit of 'How to be happy though minor'. (There has, by the way, a few seconds previously, been a prophetic hint of the advent of this tune, but of so fragmentary a nature that it has probably escaped most listeners.)

This tune may to some seem to take on a Scottish tinge from the fact that it is accompanied by a sort of bagpipe drone, or standing note (D) supplied by VIOLINS and a HORN. Further the flattened seventh of the key (the F natural shown in the extract above) is suggestive of military music over the Border. (With all due respect, we may ask our friends of the North how it comes about that they share with the African negro a penchant for pentatonic scales, flattened sevenths and rhythmic 'snaps', and also what is the explanation of the fact that when harmonising a tune of Negro character this Bohemian composer has felt a suggestion of the manner of their national instrument to be in keeping?)

A little later than this the listener's ear may be struck by some curious little whoops, at the top of the music; these are the work of the two FLUTES, three notes apart, executing a simultaneous shake, and of CLARINETS doubling this an octave below.

The tunes just heard are of the nature of subsidiary subjects, and soon after hearing the one just quoted we note the entrance of one which may, by the closely analytical, be recognised as the *Second Subject* proper—the 'Swing Low' tune already mentioned. It is softly hummed by a FLUTE to the still softer accompaniment of the Strings (Double Basses silent).



This is one of the loveliest tunes in a Symphony that abounds in such. Note the pentatonic nature of its opening half, and the contrast of the following four bars, in which the missing two notes of the scale re-appear.

The VIOLINS (Firsts and Seconds in Octaves) repeat this happy song, and with a three-note figure taken from its last bar but one, climb high up their compass. TROMBONE and STRING BASSES thunder out the opening of the same tune, and then, with a burst of energy, the WHOLE ORCHESTRA agrees wholeheartedly that every trace of pessimism is now swept away, and with that assertion they bring to an end the first section, or 'Exposition' of the Movement.

Here the first side of both H.M.V. and Columbia Records ends.

The *Development* of this material and its *Recapitulation* follow. The themes above quoted having been grasped, the course of these two further sections of the Movement will be quite clear.

A little tragic feeling is experienced in the Development and recurs at the end of the Recapitulation.

The Columbia Record is complete. The H.M.V. Record omits a few brief passages, which for the benefit of readers who wish to follow the Movement with their score may be indicated :

Introduction—Nothing omitted.

First Movement—Bars 76-83

106-113

285-288

301-308

335-342

These omissions are discreetly contrived and are of trifling importance, amounting only to 31 bars out of a total of about 430. Close-knit form not being a strong point with Dvorak, his work is more susceptible of judicious cutting than that of some other composers. Still the Columbia people have managed to avoid all cuts, and they have only given two sides to this Movement, the same as H.M.V. On the other hand, the H.M.V. Record of this particular Movement reproduces perhaps a rather better orchestral balance and steadier tone than the Columbia Record, especially in full passages, and the H.M.V. Trombones are decidedly better than the Columbia. Both H.M.V. and Columbia have, however, done substantial justice to the Movement.

Second Movement (*Largo* = Slow and broad in style).

True to his determination to write a genuine American symphony, Dvorak turned to Longfellow, and since he was already paying the Negro a compliment in the nature of some of his musical subject matter he determined to pay the Noble Redskin another in the choice of a poetical subject.

The Second Movement, which is on the whole a very lovely thing indeed, is intended, we are told, to express the composer's reflections upon the romantic love of Hiawatha and Minnehaha.

' That this peace may last for ever,
And our hands be clasped more closely,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women.'
And the ancient Arrow-maker
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,

And made answer very gravely,
 ' Yes, if Minnehaha wishes ;
 Let your heart speak, Minnehaha ! '
 And the lovely Laughing Water
 Seemed more lovely as she stood there,
 Neither willing nor reluctant,
 As she went to Hiawatha,
 Softly took the seat beside him,
 While she said, and blushed to say it,
 ' I will follow you, my husband ! '
 This was Hiawatha's wooing !

This Movement is in the key of D flat major, which, under its *alias* of C sharp major, is a not distant relative of E minor, the key of the previous Movement.

Dvorak seems to have been sanguine enough to suppose that people would not make the usual disturbance between the two Movements, and so has opened the second with a passage transitional from one to the other. It is a passage of low-lying chords, solemnly intoned by HORNS, TRUMPETS and TROMBONES (with Clarinets and Bassoons thrown in, since they happened to be at hand). It should begin *very softly*, ending in a swell to *loudly*, but neither Sir Landon Ronald nor Mr. Harty has succeeded in persuading his players to subdue their tone at the beginning, not even, indeed to play these chords in tune, the Hallé Wind players being really disgracefully 'out'.

Two bars of very soft chords by MUTED STRINGS follow—in the score and in the Columbia version, not in the H.M.V. !

Then begins one of the most beautiful musical themes in the whole of nineteenth century music. It is surprising what the economical Scots have done with the pentatonic scale, and it is surprising what the Bohemian butcher-boy can do with it. There is something of the 'five small loaves and two fishes' value about the five notes which make up this scale, when they come into the hands of racial and individual genius, and Dvorak has heightened the value by

entrusting this melody to the poetical COR ANGLAIS—with Muted String accompaniment.

Cor Anglais.



When this melody has been extended and completed (a Clarinet at one point doubling it for a few bars, at the tenth below), its last few notes are twice echoed by CLARINET (with another Clarinet and Bassoons accompanying).

There follows the solemn chord passage with which the Movement opened, now lifted from the bottom of the orchestral compass to the top, and taken from the Brass and entrusted to the WOOD WIND.

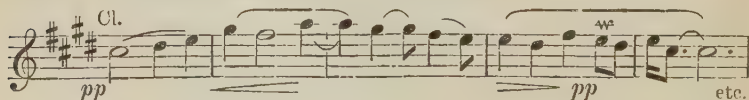
Further treatment, very delicate and tender, of the melody just quoted follows (note especially the two Horns who play it as a duet, three notes apart from each other), and then steals in this further melody, in FLUTE and OBOE:

Flute & Oboe.



This again is pentatonic in its outline—insisting upon the *Lah*, *Soh* and *Me* of the scale in a very characteristically pentatonic way, and only admitting the seventh of the scale (the *Te*) as a mere passing-note connection between the *Doh* and the *Lah*.

Another tune which is heard is this (more of it is heard from Columbia than H.M.V., by the way, for the latter 'cuts' rather extensively in this Movement):



Still another tuneful passage is the one beginning as follows, of which the New York critic, Mr. Krehbiel, who was, I believe, in the Master's confidence, said, 'it may be intended to suggest the gradual awakening of animal life in the prairie scene; and striking use is made of trills, which are exchanged between the different instrumental choirs as if they were the voices of the night or dawn in converse'.



(This, to me, somehow brings thoughts of the pastoral piping of the hero of *Iolanthe*, which, by the way, was written in 1882, ten years before the work now under discussion, so in saying this I am making no reflection upon Sullivan. There is a good deal in common between Dvorak and Sullivan, by the way.)

So the Movement continues, making use of the material already quoted, and doing so in the most charming manner, with a strange mingling of simplicity and subtlety.

Towards the end there come a TROMBONE allusion or two to the First Subject of the previous Movement (better heard in H.M.V. than in Columbia), also allusions, in Horns and in Strings, to the Second Subject of that Movement and a little later a passage where MUTED VIOLINS carry the Main Tune of the Movement and twice break off, in what, if the device were not so poetically used, we might call a 'musical chairs' fashion.

Taking this Movement as a whole one may say of it, as of the previous Movement, that it overflows with lovely

melody, but that in the matter of form it is somewhat deficient, lacking logical connection of thought. If you want to take the wind out of the sails of criticism, you will imaginatively call the Movement a patch of hedgerow blooms rather than a garden bed.

Now about the two brands of Record. In this Movement neither is entirely satisfactory. The H.M.V. not only robs us of a few short passages by 'cutting' (they are less missed here than they would be in a more formally perfect piece), but at the very outset, and almost throughout the Movement, offends us by giving the lovely Cor Anglais melody with a hoot on every A flat—and A flats are rather frequent! The Cor Anglaist (if that is the word) of the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra should have his instrument looked to.

The cuts in the H.M.V. version are as follows:

Bars 5 and 6

Bars 27-35

Bars 53-63

There is also a slight omission at the very end.
(Only about twenty bars in all.)

The Columbia Record, which gives three sides to the Movement, against the H.M.V.'s two, has the out-of-tune opening I have already mentioned, and is not always well balanced as to orchestral forces or well managed as to speeds. But its Cor Anglais (though usually a bit 'fluty') is much more even in tone, and the Cor Anglais is the most important instrument of the Orchestra so far as this Movement is concerned.

It is much to be wished that both Companies would re-record this wonderful *Largo* from the *New World Symphony*,¹ for neither of them has done the Composer or itself full justice.

Finally, a personal reminiscence, for what it is worth.

¹Since this was in type the H.M.V. has done so, with greatly improved results. It behoves purchasers to see that they are supplied with the newer version of this movement. The Cor Anglais passage is an easy test.

Long years ago I had my first hearing of this Movement from Sir Walter Parratt on the organ (it has always been a favourite piece with organists). The title *New World* set my mind on a voyage of discovery. The opening chords thrilled me with the feeling of heroic enterprise, solemnly undertaken, the Cor Anglais melody meant to me the lonely brooding over vast spaces of sea (at one point, I recall, I thought of Columbus and the floating seaweed which showed him he was at last nearing land). And these are the associations which have for me always clung about the piece. I never guessed at forests primeval, Hiawatha and Minnehaha, and, even now that I know of their claims upon my imagination, as I listen to the music they never enter my mind. The title 'New World' set my thoughts on that ocean track thirty years ago and they will never leave it. And, after all, what does it matter? I believe my interpretation is as good as that of the Composer himself!

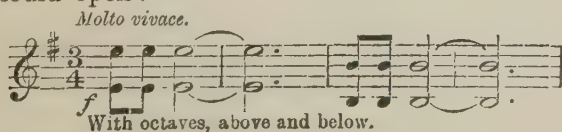
After writing this, I ask another musician who is in the room what are his associations. He answers without hesitation: 'Niggers on a Southern plantation, in the sunset'.

So there you are! Music may be a form of language, but it doesn't *tell* us much, does it? Nor is it meant to do so! Columbus at sea, niggers in a sunset, Hiawatha in the forest—any one of these ideas will do (if one must have interpretations), provided that to us it is a romantic idea, and so in keeping with the music.

Third Movement : Scherzo (*Molto vivace* = Very lively).

Both H.M.V. and Columbia Records give this vigorous and attractive Movement entirely without 'cuts'. Its orchestration is particularly vivid, and it pays well for study with the score.

It should open :



but, by some ingenuity, both Records invert this—and so take away all its meaning, for it is intended as a hint of the coming *First Subject* of the Movement :



This is played by a FLUTE and an OBOE in unison, and the rests shown above are filled in by the Clarinet echoing the tune, piecemeal. And all the time the Strings maintain a chord (a chord of the seventh, by the way, if you know what that means) in a curious *cluck-cluck* repetition.

A moment later the FIRST VIOLIN takes over the tune, the Kettledrums now doing the echoing, at any rate of the rhythm (listen keenly, for Kettledrums never get real justice from the Gramophone).

Then the VIOLINS give out the same tune in a higher octave, Wood Wind doing the echoing, and Horns working in with the very diatonic three-notes-to-a-bar tune a chromatic downhill one of their own, three-notes-to-two-bars.

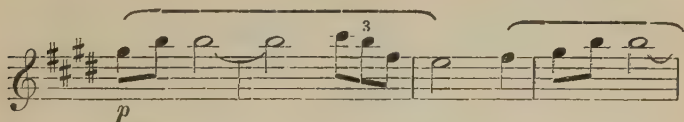
Lastly, the 'CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES, with HORNS to help them, give out the main tune, with Trumpet and Kettledrums echoing the rhythm and the Wood Wind now playing the three-notes-to-two-bars chromatic downhill tune.

That seems to be a lot of description for a mere half-inch or less of record, but I can assure the listener that by following it and learning to note everything mentioned he may teach himself a good deal.

And even now I have not mentioned everything that goes on ; for example, there is a certain very curious trumpet-call type of tune on the Clarinet, which enters into the score in one place. Find it !

This is the first section of the Scherzo, and it is now repeated intact, to give the listener a better chance of becoming acquainted with it—though for that matter he will have chance enough before the Movement ends.

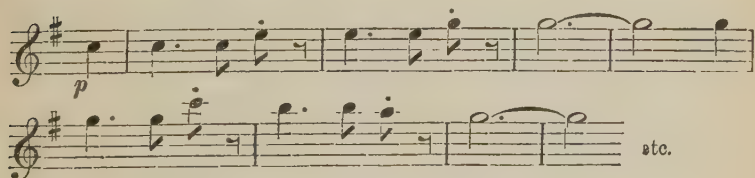
The next tune that enters is a particularly gracious one, played by FLUTE and OBOE, to a String accompaniment :



This is immediately taken up by the two CLARINETS, playing in octaves, and there ought to be a soft Triangle 'ping' in every bar, but if any reader can detect this last in either H.M.V. or Columbia Record I congratulate him !

Lastly 'CELLOS and BASSOONS take up the same lovely tune, but the Columbia players have muddled the stream here by violently throwing handfuls of loud Wood Wind quavers into it, instead of dropping them in gently, and if you can get a glimpse of a 'Cello-Bassoon melody at the bottom of it you do cleverly.

At last the *First Subject* returns. After it has died away, you will note a passing reference to the First Subject of the First Movement in the 'Cello and then in the Viola, and then we come to the *Trio*, which like the Scherzo proper is in two Sections, the first of which opens with this jolly WOOD WIND tune, more likely a dance from the composer's native Bohemia than one from a Southern plantation :



The H.M.V. gives this clearly enough ; the Columbia obscures it by allowing the Violin counterpoint to merge into the Wood Wind's Subject—a piece of rank bad management on the part of the conductor, I fear. This Section is repeated.

The second Section of the Trio is a delightful Waltz :



A charming effect is obtained in a passage of very soft trilled chords, in turn given to Strings, and to Flute and Clarinet.

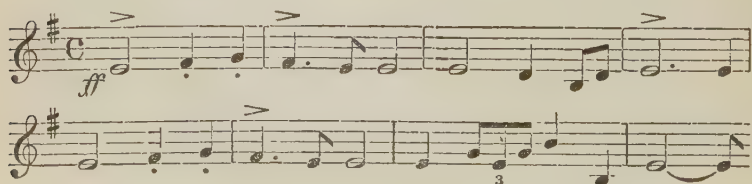
The *Scherzo* proper at last returns (at the turn of the Record in H.M.V., just after it in Columbia), and when it has been heard again, there is a brief Coda (or tail-piece) made out of the first *Scherzo* theme, the First Subject of the First Movement, and a reference to what we may call the *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* theme of the First Movement, now slowly given out by a Trumpet. This final touch should produce a most romantic effect (by H.M.V. muffed to some extent ; Columbia is better).

Fourth Movement (*Allegro con fuoco* = Quick and fiery).

This is much the least valuable of the four Movements, but it has its interest nevertheless. It seems hardly necessary to describe it, bar by bar.

The following are the chief tunes.

A heavily serious one heard first on the HORNS and TRUMPETS, loudly :



An almost frivolous, hat-in-the-air ebullition in the STRING department :



A rather tame tune in CLARINET, relieved by a 'Cello guffaw down below :



A string tune of which it may be said, 'The tail wags the dog'; it begins in a commonplace manner, then brightens up into a series of chuckles and ends with an (unintentional) tag of *Three Blind Mice*, of which a great deal of the happiest use is quickly made.



Add to all these a number of quotations from the other movements (which will be easily recognised, even where two of them are running in double harness), and you have the last Movement of the *New World*.

The orchestration is sometimes piquant and sometimes blatant. Note a most effective 'Piatti Solo' (*i.e.*, a touch of the Cymbals) followed by an ascending passage by the Bassoons.

The Columbia Record gives this Movement complete; the H.M.V. Record has the following omissions:

- Bars 1- 9
- Bars 49- 59
- Bars 100-114
- Bars 128-167

i.e., a total of 75 bars out of 348—not very much, and in any case this Movement bears cutting better than any other in the Symphony, being slung together, rather than composed.

The H.M.V. people give two sides to this Movement, the Columbia three.

Five Large Columbia Light Blue Records. L. 1523-4-5-6-7, each 7s. 6d.

Four Large Black H.M.V. Records. D 536, 537, 587, 613, each 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Goodwin & Tabb, Miniature Score, 6s.

RECORD No. 16

Vocal Solos	{	<i>Largo al Factotum</i> (From the Opera, <i>The Barber of Seville</i>)	Rossini
	{	<i>Credo</i> (From the Opera, <i>Othello</i>)	Verdi

GIACOMO RIMINI

Rossini. *Largo al Factotum.*

This is a favourite patter song from the Opera, *The Barber of Seville* (1816), the libretto of which (like that of Mozart's Opera, *Figaro*) is based upon Beaumarchais.

Figaro, the barber and general handy-man of Seville, his guitar hanging from his neck, bustles on to the stage, singing :

Largo al factotum della città.
 Presto a bottega, che l'alba è già,
 La ran la lera la là.
 Ah, che bel vivere, che bel piacere
 Per un barbiere di qualità!
 Ah, bravo Figaro, bravo, bravissimo,
 Fortunatissimo per verità,
 Pronto a far tutto, la notte il giorno
 Sempre d' intorno in giro sta.
 Miglior cuccagna per un barbiere
 Vita più nobile, no non si dà
 Rasoi e pettini, lancette o forbici
 Al mio comando tutto qui sta.
 Donne, ragazzi,—Vecchi, fanciulle
 Qua la parrucca,—Presto la barba...
 Qua la sanguigna.. —Figaro... Figaro...
 Son qua, son qua. Figaro... Figaro...
 Eccomi qua.
 Pronto prontissimo son come il fulmine,
 Sono il *factotum* della città
 Ah! bravo Figaro, bravo, bravissimo,
 Fortunatissimo per verità.
 Ah ah! che bella vita.

—*Sterbini.*

The present singer seems to depart slightly from these words once or twice.

FREE TRANSLATION.

Room for the city's factotum!
 On his way to his shop at the dawn of the day.
La ran la lera la là.
 Oh what a life—like a spinning teetotum!
 Fashion employs me, and fashion must pay.
 Bravo, my Figaro! Bravo, my boy!
 You're fortune's favourite, your trade's but a toy.
 Ready for anything by night or by day.
 Always off somewhere or back again home.
 What trade is better, O tell me, I pray?
 I never find one wherever I roam.
 Lancets and scissors and brushes and razors,
 All at my hand there, ready for use.
 Ladies and children, lawyers, star-gazers,
 Clip, shave, shampoo them and brush them up spruce.
 Figaro! Figaro! Coming, sir! Coming!
 Quick as I can, sir! Accept my excuse!
 Oh, what a life—like a spinning teetotum
 Whirls on his course the city's factotum.

—P. A. S.

Verdi. *Credo.*

Of this justly famous piece of dramatic declaration there exists a large number of records. The one I have named above seems to me, after careful testing, to be the best, but tastes are not all alike, and readers may, if they wish, make their own choice, by making use of the convenience which all the larger dealers now offer for testing and comparing records.

Verdi's two Shakespearean operas, his *Otello* and his *Falstaff*, are his masterpieces. *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore* are childish beside *Otello* and *Falstaff*, and *Aida* a mere gaudy show. Yet these two greatest works are at present the least heard, *i.e.*, as wholes, though this *Credo* from the one opera and *Quand era paggio* from the other are popular concert pieces.

How lamentably do most opera composers fail when they approach Shakespeare! That a Gounod should attempt

a *Romeo and Juliet*, or an Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet* — — ! And it is to the everlasting glory of Verdi that in his old age (for he was seventy-three when he produced *Otello* and seventy-nine when he produced *Falstaff*) he was able almost to cast aside the conventionality of Italian operatic expression, and to mate one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies and one of his happiest comedies with music not unfitting.

Sixteen years had elapsed between the composition of *Aida* and that of *Otello*, sixteen years which he had, but for the composition of his *Requiem*, passed in silence. With *Otello* he opens a new period. He no longer seeks cheap, easy-running tune, but, doubtless influenced in some measure by the example of a contemporary (the greatest German dramatic composer and the greatest Italian dramatic composer were born within six months of one another), he places in the forefront of the demands he makes upon his genius a genuinely dramatic treatment of the thought of his librettist.

This librettist was Boito, himself a composer of distinction, as well as a man of fine literary taste and a poet. He was a student and admirer of Wagner, though not in his music a follower of him. Possibly it was he who influenced his senior (Verdi was born in 1813, Boito in 1842) in the Wagnerian theories and achievements.

There is something Wagnerian about this *Credo*. The directness of dramatic utterance is Wagnerian. Here, as stated above, is no attempt to be lyrical for the sake of being lyrical ; the shape of the vocal phrases and general 'lay-out' of the piece are conditioned by the sequences of thought in the words. The orchestral part is almost entirely constructed of three bold phrases that have a strong resemblance to Wagnerian leading *motifs*. Yet the expression is throughout personal to Verdi and national to Italy.

It is worthy of remark that the idea of putting into Iago's mouth an expression of his faith is entirely Boito's.

And the greatest compliment we can pay him upon his achievement is to say that it is Shakespearean in its intensity, and psychologically takes its place as a part of the dramatic scheme.

The Italian words of the Credo are as follows :

Credo in un Dio crudel
che m'ha creato simile à sè,
e che nell' ira io nomo.

Dalla viltà d'un germe
o d'un atòmo vile son nato.

Son scellerato perchè son uomo ;
e sento il fango originario in me
Si ! quest'è la mia fè !

Credo con fermo cuor,
siccome crede la vedovella al tempio,
che il mal ch'io penso e che da me procede
per mio destino adempio.

Credo che il giusto è un istrion beffardo
e nel viso e nel cuor,
che tutto è in lui bugiardo,
lagrima, bacio, sguardo, sacrificio ed onor.

E Credo l'uom gioco d'iniqua sorte dal germe della culla
al verme dell' avel.

Vien dopo tanta irrision la Morte
E poi—?
E poi—?
La Morte è il Nulla,
e vecchia fola il Ciel.

In the vocal score of *Otello* (published by Messrs. Ricordi) is given an able translation of the libretto by the late Dr. Hueffer (music critic of the *Times*, 1878-89). I have not in the following translation taken more than a few words from this official translation, which is a singing version, and hence necessarily conditioned by the requirement that its syllables shall fit the notes. As an example of what I mean—Dr. Hueffer has been unable (as I think any translator with a singer in view would be) to open the various sections with the bold 'I BELIEVE,' as an

equivalent of the word 'CREDO' which always appears in this position. He has occasionally also been driven to an inversion of the order of the librettist's ideas.¹

I Believe in a cruel God
who has created me in his own likeness
and whom in wrath I worship.

And of the vileness of some germ
or paltry atom, am I born.

I am base, since I am man,
and feel within me the mud out of which I arose.
Yes! this is the faith in which I live.

I Believe with a faith as unshaken
as that of any pious crone before the altar,
that all the evil that fills my thought, and that from me proceeds,
does but fulfil my fate.

I Believe that the righteous is a jesting player,
In face and heart,
In all his doings
he is a liar—
in tears, in kisses, glances, in sacrifices and in honour.

And I Believe that man's the sport of evil fate
from his earliest moments in the cradle until he becomes the prey
of worms in the tomb.

Yes . . . after the mockery of life comes Death.

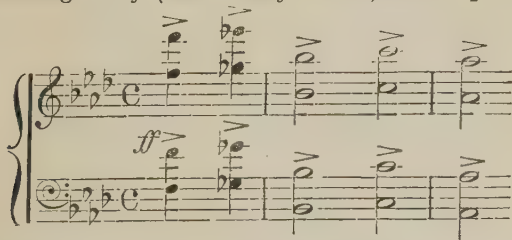
And then—?

And then—?

And then—**All's Done**

And Heaven's a hoary fable.

The *leading motif* (as we may call it) of the piece is this :

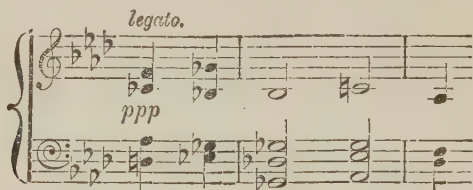


¹ Messrs. Ricordi have lately published another edition of this Aria, with a new translation by Percy Pinkerton, which is now very generally adopted.

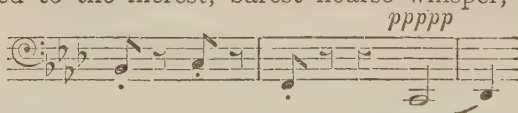
It appears in many different forms, sometimes clothed in very striking harmonies as here :



or here :



or reduced to the merest, barest hoarse whisper, as here :



(The *ppppp* is, by the way, a speciality of Verdi. The conductor and players who can make the fine distinction between the composer's *pp*, *ppp*, *pppp*, *ppppp* are indeed worthy Verdians !)

Another expressive theme used, *leading motif* fashion, is :



Large Aeolian Vocalion Pink Record. A. 0204, 5s. 6d.

Printed Music. Verdi's *Otello*, published by Ricordi ; vocal-piano score, 10s. ; miniature full orchestral score, 42s. ; libretto, Italian and English, 2s.

The *Credo* alone can be obtained in vocal-piano score (two editions), with translations respectively by Hueffer and Pinkerton, price 2s.

RECORD No. 17

Orchestral Pieces *Introduction and Wedding March* Rimsky-Korsakof
(From *The Golden Cockerel*)

HALLÉ ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Hamilton Harty)

The spirit of this music will best be realised after a brief description of the very fantastic plot of the Opera from which it is taken, *The Golden Cockerel* (Rimsky's last Opera, not performed until 1910, two years after his death). The libretto was drawn from Poushkin.

THE STORY OF THE OPERA.

FIRST ACT. King Dodon is in trouble. His enemies attack him on all sides. An astrologer offers him a Golden Cockerel, which whenever danger threatens will warn him by crowing. He promises to reward the astrologer, eats a good supper, and lies down to sleep. The cock crows, Dodon wakes, sends off the army in charge of his two sons, and goes to sleep again. The cock crows again, Dodon wakes, and decides he must, after all, go himself to the war.

SECOND ACT. Dodon finds that his army has been beaten, and his two sons killed. He sees a tent belonging to the enemy, and a cannon is just about to be fired at it, when a beautiful lady walks out—a Queen, with whom the King is quickly in love, and whom he marries.

THIRD ACT. Dodon is back in his palace. In comes the astrologer and claims his reward—the Queen herself. Dodon at once strikes him dead with his sceptre, and then the Golden Cockerel strikes down Dodon with his beak. The courtiers cry out in terror, darkness falls, and then light comes again . . . Here is the Astrologer who closes the play by assuring us that it is only a dream, and that no harm has been done.

This is a lively, humorous opera, with a good deal of the oriental in both libretto and music.

The Golden Cockerel was heard in London during the famous Beecham season of 1914, and in 1924 was introduced into the repertory of the British National Opera Company.

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

This is a very interesting Record, and well worth careful examination.

(a) The INTRODUCTION is a short piece of very piquant orchestration. Glockenspiel and Harps play important parts.

The complete list of the instruments used is as follows :

- 2 Flutes and Piccolo
- 2 Oboes and Cor Anglais
- 2 Clarinets and Bass Clarinet
- 2 Bassoons and Double Bassoon
- 4 Horns
- 3 Trumpets
- 3 Trombones and Tuba
- Kettledrums, Side Drum, Big Drum and Triangle
- Cymbals
- Glockenspiel, Celesta and Harps
- Strings

The Trumpets are, throughout this piece, muted.

I propose to describe the orchestration, which is very brilliant, bar by bar. Even to readers who do not trouble to possess themselves of the score, this method will be found to offer a very easy means of tracing the entries and the combinations of the various instruments.

Bar 1. MUTED TRUMPETS give out a 'cockcrow'.

3. Two Oboes join them—but, necessarily, not with any very perceptible addition to the effect, unless in giving a slightly sharper edge to the tone.

5. MUTED VIOLINS join in the long-held note that here ends the call, and at once begins to fade.

7. Trumpets have now died away into silence, but Oboes and Muted Violins continue the long-held note

(doubled two octaves lower by Clarinets), whilst underneath, MUTED 'CELLOS enter with a florid little *motif* of oriental suggestion.

The 'CELLOS continue this *motif* for a few bars, taking it lower and lower, the Wood Wind, meanwhile, quietly thickening out their holding-notes, until they become a soft extended chord.

11-12. Strings (all muted) with Clarinets and Bassoons now hold a chord, above which are heard the FLUTES and OBOES, an octave apart, playing the florid *motif*. HARP and some WOOD play against this a little figure of detached arpeggio notes.

13. Lower Strings hold the chord, First Violins maintain a *tremolo*, which very softly descends the chromatic scale in parallel thirds, doubled by Flutes, Oboes and Celesta (HARP and various WOOD carry on the arpeggio detached-note figure). A soft roll is played on a Cymbal, with drum-sticks.

17-18. The force engaged in the parallel thirds is thinned down to First Violins and Celesta. PICCOLO and HARP (harmonics) carry up the arpeggio figure.

19. A Muted String chord, doubled by Harp; against this background, a high CLARINET note which blossoms into an arabesque, and then closes up into the long high note again.

20. Under this long, high Clarinet note, which is now withering away, are heard Muted Strings and Harp chords, with, in the FIRST VIOLINS, the little chromatic opening figure of the oriental *motif* of bar 7.

21-2. Another CLARINET takes over the long note and the arabesque, whilst Muted Strings and Harp repeat their chords, slightly changed in harmony.

23. MUTED VIOLINS in octaves, doubled by OBOE and COR ANGLAIS in octaves, make the arabesque into a rhythmic, sinuous rapid figure, a few Wood Wind and Lower Strings supplying slow chords.

24. PICCOLO and CLARINET in octaves repeat the figure with quickened pulse, other Wood, Strings and Harp accompanying.

25-6. The same proceeding repeated, with FLUTE for Clarinet.

27-8. The florid, oriental *motif* from bar 7 is given out (quickened) four times, a step or two lower each time, by PICCOLO and FLUTE, against the arpeggio figure in *pizzicato* LOWER STRINGS and HARP *glissandos* and soft Wood Wind chords.

29-30. FLUTE and CLARINET do much the same, to a similar accompaniment.

31-2. OBOE and VIOLINS play the oriental *motif* (at its original pace) to an accompaniment of Clarinets, Bassoons, and Lower Strings.

33-5. A Muted Strings and Bassoon chord (Harp arpeggios heard just as it opens) serves as a quiet background for a cadenza-like extended treatment of the chromatic oriental *motif*, by CLARINET.

36. The Cadenza continues, but resumes something more like the original form of the *motif*, whilst LOWER STRINGS (the mutes at last removed), BASS CLARINET and BASSOONS play an ascending chromatic figure.

37. FLUTE and OBOE in unison play an inversion of the Clarinet part in the last bar (*i.e.*, turned upwards instead of downwards); COR ANGLAIS, CLARINETS, VIOLINS and VIOLAS play an inversion of the part of Bassoons and Lower Strings in the last bar (*i.e.*, turned downwards instead of upwards).

38. GLOCKENSPIEL and HARP, against String and Bassoon chords, play a slow arpeggio *motif*, doubled by PICCOLO 'off the beat.' CELLOS start, with their bottom note, a slow *pizzicato* scale, which they carry right up, rising steadily, beat by beat, through the next six bars, strengthened first by (sustained) FIRST BASSOON, then Cor Anglais.

- 39-40. Similar, but FLUTE now doubles the arpeggio.
 41-2. Similar, but OBOE now doubles the arpeggio.
 43. Similar, but CLARINET now doubles the arpeggio.
 44-5. Long chords by WOOD, whilst VIOLINS double the arpeggio figure, increased in rate of speed.
 46. A chord in HORNS alone.
 47. Whilst this chord continues, PICCOLO, OBOE, HARP and VIOLINS, *pizzicato*, take the arpeggio.
 48. STRINGS take the chord very softly. FLUTE, CLARINET, HARP and VIOLINS *pizzicato* take the arpeggio.
 49-54. This sort of alternation continues.
 55. VIOLINS, *bowed*, now take the figure—
 56. here joined by GLOCKENSPIEL, HARP and PICCOLO, which add, between the beats, the same arpeggio figure, in canon with the Violins, *i.e.*, playing a passage of the same shape, but overlapping instead of coinciding. This sort of thing continues (Flute and later Oboe joining in the Canon), until bar—
 63. where PICCOLO, FLUTES, COR ANGLAIS and VIOLINS begin an upward-moving melody, with a considerable *crescendo*, in which WOOD and BRASS gradually join.
 67. TREMOLO STRING chords (*sul ponticello*)¹, Violins very active with a running arpeggio figure (barely heard in this Record). SIDE DRUM starts a roll, TRUMPET enters with its original call which, in bar—
 68. is taken up (unfortunately almost inaudibly) by various WOOD WIND instruments.
 71. The WHOLE ORCHESTRA is now engaged and so continues for the remaining four bars.

(b) The MARCH is that for King Dodon's wedding. The description in the score (freely translated) is as follows :

Trumpets are heard: the triumphal procession passes in front of the palace. First come the King's body guard, with their self-important boastful airs; then the Queen's suite, in costumes quaint and many

¹ *lit.*, 'on the bridge,' *i.e.*, with the bow very close to the bridge of the violin, producing a peculiar effect, which Forsyth in his *Orchestration* describes as a 'sort of core of sound covered up by a thick layer of scrape'.

coloured, as though they had just stepped out of an Eastern fairy tale.

Some of the company have only one eye, in the middle of the forehead. Others have horns, others heads like dogs. There are also negro giants and negro dwarfs, veiled slaves bearing treasure-caskets and golden vessels.

Last of all, in a gilded chariot, appear the King and Queen. The populace bursts into excitement and shouts for joy.

It seems hardly needful to describe in detail the orchestration of this piece, as the reader who has followed with care, in several hearings, the notes on the orchestration of the previous piece will easily identify most of the instruments and combinations here.

Observe in the opening bars the TRUMPET call answered by FLUTES and OBOES.

The instrument that enters with a tune (of six bars in length) about three-eighths of an inch from the outer circle of the Record is ostensibly COR ANGLAIS, but sounds a little too smooth in tone.

TROMBONES have a fine chance of making themselves felt somewhere about the middle of the piece, where they enter with a tune of their own, a note three times repeated followed by a series of rolling triplets. This is the tune first introduced as an arabesque by Clarinet, bar 19 above

PICCOLO too comes into his own before the piece is ended.

Large Columbia Light Blue Record. L. 1533, 7s. 6d.

Printed Music. Orchestral Score, and also Piano Score, of these pieces alone published by Jurgenson, Leipzig, and obtainable through Goodwin & Tabb at 10s. 6d. for the Orchestral Score and 3s. 6d. for the Piano Score. The Vocal-Pianoforte Score of the whole Opera (with English text) costs £1 1s. Orchestral Score not available.

RECORD No. 18

Vocal Solos	•	{ <i>The Song of the Flea</i> . . . Moussorgsky { <i>Song of the Viking Guest</i> . . . Rimsky-Korsakof { (From the Opera <i>Sadko</i>)	
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CHALIAPINE

Moussorgsky. *The Song of the Flea.*

This is the cynical song of Mephistopheles in Auerbach's Drinking Cellar at the opening of Goethe's Faust. It is a satire upon princes' favourites.

Chaliapine sings it in Russian, with an orchestral accompaniment. The original accompaniment was for the Piano. I do not know whether the composer provided this orchestral version; it has no very special effectiveness. There is a good Aeolian Record made by Rosing, who also sings it in Russian; this has Piano accompaniment.

Once, long ago, a king lived who kept such a fine fat flea.

(A flea! A flea!)

And cherished him as dearly as tho' a son were he,

A flea! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

A flea! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! A flea!

He sent for his own tailor, who came to Court in haste.

'Now cut my flea a doublet, and clothe him in good taste.'

A doublet for a flea! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

A flea! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

A flea! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! A flea of taste!

Our flea is dressed in velvet, and silk and golden hue,

And full liberty to him is given at the Court.

Ha, ha!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! A flea!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! A flea!

A minister the king made him, a diamond star he wore,

And all his poor relations got orders galore!

Ha, ha!

The courtiers, male and female, they were no longer gay.

The queen and all her ladies were pestered night and day.

Ha, ha!

To scratch they were forbidden ; they had to bear the prick ;
But we, when we are bitten, know how to scratch and kick.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Though very clever in its expression of Goethe's satire, this is not one of Moussorgsky's greatest songs. By its means, however, his name and his music were first introduced to many people in this country, and it is always enjoyed.

The above translation is taken from Chaliapine's Book of Words for his recitals in this country, by permission of Mr. F. W. Gaisberg.

Rimsky-Korsakof. *The Song of the Viking Guest.*

Rimsky-Korsakof's opera *Sadko* is based upon national legend. Its story is as follows :

At Novgorod dwelt a poor minstrel who earned a precarious livelihood by performing on his *guslee* to the rich men of the city.

One day at a banquet he had the misfortune to annoy those present by reproaching them with their love of wealth, and was unceremoniously bundled out. Hurt by this treatment, he betook himself one lovely summer's evening to the banks of Lake Ilmen, and sang his woes to its waves.

Attracted by the music, the beautiful Volkhova, youngest daughter of the Ocean Monarch, emerged from the water, surrounded by her suite of maidens. Enchanted both by the beauty and talent of Sadko, Volkhova promised that they should meet again, when riches and happiness would become his lot. She instructed him to cast his nets in the lake waters and assured him that he would draw golden fish from them in sufficient abundance to enable him to travel the world over.

Sadko, overwhelmed with joy, returned to the town and wagered his head against the wealth of the merchants that he would catch golden fish in Lake Ilmen. Volkhova fulfilled her promise, but Sadko, unwilling to profit to the full extent, was satisfied with a fleet of thirty vessels with which he set sail for a long voyage.

One evening in mid-ocean his ship suddenly came to a standstill and its sails were torn from its masts. In order to propitiate the Sea-King casks of gold and precious stones were pitched into the waves. This

proving of no avail, it was assumed that the king required a human sacrifice. Lots were drawn and Sadko, who had already guessed that Volkhova's hand was directing these circumstances, was placed on a plank and drawn down to the Sea-King's domain.

Entranced by Sadko's glorification, sung in his honour, the King bestowed his youngest daughter, Volkhova, upon the minstrel. The betrothal was celebrated with submarine pomp and circumstance. Sadko then began anew to play and sing, but his music rose to such a high emotional pitch that the whole company joined in with a frenzied dance. This caused a storm and many ships were wrecked.

Suddenly St. Nicholas appeared, and remonstrating with Sadko, dashed his *guslee* to the ground, thus putting an end to the dance and to its attendant storm. He bade the minstrel return to his home and transformed Volkhova into the river that flows by the city of Novgorod.

I have given this in the words of Mr. Montagu-Nathan, in his *History of Russian Music* (Reeves, 1914, 7s. 6d.), a volume which I cordially recommend to any readers who wish to possess a comprehensive treatment of the Russian School, together with a synopsis of the plots of all the Russian Operas they are ever likely to hear in this country, and a good many others.

The Song of the Viking Guest occurs in the scene where Sadko refuses to accept his full reward, but only thirty vessels; here he begs some of the foreign merchants to sing the songs of their own countries, and in this way some strongly contrasted musical material is introduced into the score, as, for instance, an Oriental tune, sung by a Hindoo merchant—the well-known 'Hindoo Song'.

The legend of Sadko apparently impressed Rimsky-Korsakof very strongly, for he based upon it not only this Opera, but also a Tone Poem.

The Tone Poem was the earlier (1867), the Opera much later (1895).

On threatening rocks the waves break with a roar,
And in a sheet of foam go hurtling back;
But firmly the grey cliffs
The waves' impact withstand,
Still frowning o'er the sea,
We Vikings are framèd like those stony heights,

With blood congealed to iron in the ocean wave,
 The sea-fog's mystery has imbued our minds.
 The ocean saw our birth,
 And on its breast we die.

Swords of steel and sharp arrows have the Vikings,
 To deal their foes a death unerring.
 Bold are the sons of the Northland,
 No lord have they but God alone—
 In the gloom of the northern seas.

—*Translated by H. M. Buck.*

Large H.M.V. Red Record. D.B. 103, 8s. 6d.

Printed Music. *Song of the Flea*, arranged for Voice and Piano, 2s. (Goodwin & Tabb). *Song of the Viking Guest*, also arranged for Voice and Piano, 2s. (Hawkes).

RECORDS Nos. 19 and 20

Orchestral Suite *Peer Gynt* Grieg
Morning
Death of Ase
Anitra's Dance
Dance of the Imps
(or In the Hall of the Mountain King)
Solveig's Song¹

NEW QUEEN'S HALL LIGHT ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Alick MacLean)

or

ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Sir Landon Ronald)

The First *Peer Gynt* Suite is one of the most popular pieces of music to be found in our orchestral programmes. Merely listening to it as music the public finds enormous pleasure, but I am going to suggest that for Gramophonists an added pleasure may be found by re-arranging the order of the pieces and replacing them in their dramatic context.

The best way to do this is to read the play in the standard English translation of William and Charles Archer,² but I offer a substitute for this in a summary of the plot scene by scene.

THE STORY OF PEER GYNT.

The story of Peer Gynt (properly pronounced *Pair Gunt*, or something like it) is the life story of a man who was almost completely *self-ish*, not merely selfish in the sense of greedy of the good things of the world, but self-ish in the sense that he was a worshipper of his own identity.

Peer was a man with the gift of an active imagination, but heredity and early environment turned his thoughts inward, instead of outward; his temperament, moreover, tended to versatility, rather than continuity.

¹ Solveig's Song is omitted from the Ronald (H.M.V.) performance, which is, however, in other respects better than the MacLean (Columbia) performance.

² Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 4s. 6d.

Looked at in one way, Ibsen's play is a wonderful study of a personality. Looked at in another it is a character sketch of Ibsen's Norwegian countrymen in the mass, at a certain period of their national life. In either case it is a sermon, but it is best to forget this at a first reading, and to take it as a piece of vivid and often humorous drama.

I.

We first meet Peer in the home of his childhood, with his mother. He is telling her fabulous tales of his exploits, how he rode a wild reindeer on the mountain, and so forth. Against herself, his mother is carried away by his imagination; against herself she almost believes in his lively narrative of great doings. Peer then turns his thoughts to the coming days. 'Only wait,' he says, 'till I have done something really *grand* !'

II.

Peer, in his ragged old clothes, goes off to a wedding at the farm of a well-to-do peasant. Dancing and singing are going on around him and he wishes to dance with a beautiful and good girl, Solveig, whom he meets for the first time. She repulses him. Out of pique and dare-devilry, Peer runs away up the mountain with the bride, Ingrid, on his back, only to desert her the next morning, deaf to her entreaties (for she had long loved him).

III.

Peer's doings at the wedding have made him an outlaw. In the mountains he meets the Troll King's daughter and falls in love with her. On the back of a huge pig they ride off to ask the King's consent to their marriage. At the Court, surrounded by Trolls, Gnomes and Brownies, the King initiates him into the manners of the Trolls, and into their religion. Summed up, this latter is one brief command — 'MAN TO THYSELF BE—ENOUGH'. (Spiritually, then, Peer has always been a Troll, without knowing it !)

The King's daughter and her sister dance and play. But, alas, Peer has still human vision, and he sees them as :

A bell-cow, with hoof on a gut harp strumming,
A sow in socklets, atrip to the tune.

The Troll King takes up his glazier's tools to operate on Peer's eyes, and give him real Troll eyesight. All the Imps, Brownies and Pixies torment Peer. Church bells are heard in the distance ; the Palace collapses and all disappears.

MUSIC. *In the Hall of the Mountain King.*¹

IV.

Peer builds a hut on the Mountain, where he may live his outlaw life. Solveig, the girl who refused to dance with him at the wedding, has all this time loved him, and, despite his misdeeds, at last joins him. He welcomes her, but stepping outside the hut, he meets one of his old sins in the shape of an ugly hag. She threatens to haunt his newly-opening married life, and thus to make his wife miserable. Peer, for once moved by an unselfish thought, that of sparing his bride, Solveig, makes off and leaves her to wait for him.

V.

Peer is running away to America. He calls at the old home to bid his mother 'Good-bye', and finds her dying. Seated on her bed, he beguiles her with imaginative flights, as of old. At last he turns round and looks at her. She is dead. Peer fares forth again—never, for long years, to see the old home.

MUSIC. *Death of Ase.*

(Properly pronounced Oas-e(r), or something like it.)

¹ Called on the Columbia Record 'Dance of the Imps'; it occupies part of one side of a Record, opening a little more than half the distance from the outer circle to the inner,

VI.

The Moroccan Coast. Peer, who has made a large fortune in America, by traffic in slaves and the export of idols to China, comes sailing in his private yacht, with a party of his friends. He has just heard that Turkey and Greece are at war, and, as a business man, has decided to throw in his lot with the former as the stronger power. His friends wish to fight for Greece. They run away with the yacht, leaving Peer on land alone. He sees the yacht in the offing. Suddenly it blows up and is gone.

VII.

MUSIC. *Morning Mood*.¹

Daybreak in a grove of acacias and palms.

Peer finds a white charger in the desert, and royal robes stolen from the Emperor. Dressed in the robes and riding the charger, he reaches a Bedouin encampment, and is received with reverence as a Prophet. The girls, one Anitra among them, dance for him.

MUSIC. *Anitra's Dance*.

Some nights later he runs away with Anitra before him on the horse. By cunning she gets from him his bag of gold, and rides off on the charger, leaving him alone in the wilderness. He casts aside his eastern dress, and decides to become a travelling scientist, to visit the scenes of ancient civilisations, and 'study past ages and Time's voracity'.

VIII.

Peer has a vision;² he sees the waiting Solveig.

The stage directions are :

A summer day. Far up in the North. A hut in the forest. The door, with a large wooden bar, stands open. Reindeer-horns over it. A flock of goats by the wall of the hut.

¹ Called in the Score: *Morgenstemning*, i.e., 'Morning Mood'.

² The score gives the information that at the performance at Christiania the scene was so treated.

A middle-aged woman, fair-haired and comely, sits spinning outside in the sunshine.

MUSIC. *Solveig's Song.*

The Winter may pass, and the Spring may go by,
 The Summer-time may fade and the year may die,
 But some day thou wilt come back again to me,
 And thou wilt find me waiting, as I promised, for thee.
 God keep thee and guard thee where'er thou art,
 God guide all thy steps till we meet not to part.
 Trusting I wait until thy voice I hear,
 And if thou art in Heav'n I shall haste to meet thee there.¹

IX.

Peer in Egypt. He waits beside Memnon's statue before sunrise, to hear its fabled song. As the sun is seen above the horizon the song begins. The 'travelling scientist' makes a brief note of the interesting occurrence in his pocket book, and passes on.

X.

Peer before the Sphinx. He meets a German philosopher, who in true German philosophic fashion is reasoning and arguing as to the identity of the Sphinx. Peer's solution of the riddle is conclusive—'He's *himself*!' The riddle of life is solved, says the German, and carries Peer away hailing him as the very Kaiser of Interpreters—'on the basis of self'.

XI.

A mad-house in Cairo. The Philosopher is director. But, 'last night at eleven', Reason itself went mad. Thus 'the persons hitherto considered mad are now accordant with Reason'. A general release seems the only thing, and this takes place. Peer is introduced to the inmates and crowned with a wreath as 'Self-hood's Kaiser'.

¹ Mrs. R. H. Elkin's translation, as given in *Twenty Selected Songs by Grieg, Book I.* (Enoch, 3s. 6d.).

XII.

On board ship in the North Sea. A storm. Peer plans how, with the remains of his American fortune, he will lord it over all the countryside. 'If I've had to howl with the lashes of Fate, trust me to find folks I can lash in my turn.'

A Strange Passenger comes to Peer, and begs that in case he is drowned, the Passenger may have his corpse—'To help my researches in Science'.

The ship strikes, Peer is in the sea clinging to a piece of wreckage. He pushes off the Cook, who wishes to share it with him. The Strange Passenger bobs his head out of the water and resumes his gloomy talk. 'Avaunt! thou bugbear!' says Peer, 'I will not die; I must ashore.' 'As for that,' says the Passenger, 'be re-assured; *one dies not midmost of Act Five!*' 'Ah, there he's let it out at last,' says Peer. 'He was a sorry moralist.'

XIII.

Peer, safely landed, tramps home. In a country churchyard on the mountain road he sees a country funeral. The Pastor recounts the life of the deceased. 'No patriot was he. Both for Church and State a fruitless tree. But there, on the upland ridge—there he was *great*, because he was *himself!*' 'Now that's what I call Christianity,' says Peer:

Nothing to seize on one's mind unpleasantly—
And the topic, immovably being oneself,
That the pastor's homily turned upon,
Is full, in its essence of edification.

XIV.

A heath. Thread-balls, wisps of mist lie and roll about the path: they are the Thoughts Peer should have thought. Withered leaves fly before the wind: they are Watchwords Peer should have proclaimed. There is a sighing in the air—the Songs Peer should have sung. Dewdrops hang on the herbage—Tears he should have shed. Broken straws

lie there—Deeds he should have done. In the distance Peer hears his old dead mother's voice, reproaching him.

So is his life summed up !

XV.

When Peer was a boy one of his pastimes was the melting of silver coins his spendthrift father gave him, and the moulding of them into buttons. Now, on his way, he meets Life's Great Button Moulder. He has orders from the Master to melt up Peer's soul, as a button ill-made, and to recast it. This is to be the end, then, of Peer's 'being himself'—to become material for somebody else's self ! The really good go to Heaven. The really wicked go to Hell. Peer, like many another, is fit for neither. He must just be melted up.

He has set at defiance his life's design,

Clap him in the ladle, with other spoilt goods.

Peer wishes to get witness to his good deeds. He begs for time and is given 'to the next cross-roads'.

XVI.

Peer meets an old man and begs his help. But, alas ! the old man turns out to be the King of the Trolls. He can but witness to Peer's having lived in the spirit of the Trolls' motto : 'To thyself be—enough !'

The Button-Moulder meets him again. Once more Peer begs for respite, and once more is given 'to the next cross-roads'.

Peer wishes to meet a parson, confess his sins, and bring the schedule of them to the Button-Moulder. If he cannot prove his fitness for Heaven, can he do so for Hell ? It is the loss of Self that he dreads beyond all.

XVII.

Peer meets the devil with a bird net, catching souls. The race, he complains, has sunk so shamefully low that there are few for him nowadays. Neither very good nor

very bad, fit neither for Heaven nor Hell, people pass neither to God nor the Devil, but come at death to the Button-Moulder's ladle.

Peer muses :

So unspeakably poor, then, a soul can go
Back to nothingness, into the grey of the mist.
Thou beautiful earth, be not angry with me
That I tramped thy grasses to no avail.
Thou beautiful sun, thou hast squandered away
Thy glory of light in an empty hut.
I will clamber once more, to the dizziest peak ;
I will look once more on the rising sun,
Gaze till I'm tired o'er the promised land ;
Then try to get snowdrifts piled over me.
They can write above them : Here *no one* lies buried ;
And afterwards—then ! let things go as they can.

XVIII.

MUSIC. *Solveig's Song* ; Orchestral version.

(At this point in the play is performed, whilst the scenery is being changed, an orchestral version of Solveig's lament on being deserted, the same as is included in the first *Peer Gynt* Suite.)

Peer meets the Button-Moulder again. They see the light from a hut shining in the distance. They hear a woman singing. It is Solveig, waiting in the hut Peer built. Peer runs toward her. 'Thou innocent woman in thy love, oh, there hide me, hide me !'

He buries his face in her lap. She sings a Cradle Song :

Sleep, thou dearest boy of mine.

As she does so, he—sleeps. The Button-Moulder's voice (behind the house) :

We'll meet at the last cross-road again, Peer ;
And then we'll see whether—I say no more !

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

As in the case of other Records mentioned in this book, I give, for the benefit of those readers who wish to make each Record they play the means to a fuller understanding of music, a description of the orchestration.

There are really two Suites made by Grieg himself out of his *Peer Gynt* music. They are as follows :

I.

Morning Mood.

Ase's Death.

Anitra's Dance.

In the Hall of the Mountain King.

II.

Abduction of the Bride: Ingrid's Lament.

Arabian Dance.

Peer Gynt's Homecoming.

Solveig's Song.

It will be seen that for the purpose of these Gramophone Records a combination has been made of the First Suite and the last piece from the Second Suite.

‘IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING.’

(‘Dance of the Imps’—as called in the Columbia Record.)

The musical material here is very simple, and much repeated. The effect of the piece comes a good deal from a gradual and simultaneous increase of speed and force (*crescendo e stretto poco a poco*).

At the opening ‘CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES in octaves, *pizzicato*, introduce the short (four-bar) theme of the whole piece ; BASSOONS in octaves keeping the four-beats-in-a-bar rhythm, in an up and down Doh-Soh *pom-pom*. Then BASSOONS in octaves take the melody, and ‘Cellos and Double Basses the *pom-pom*.

This alternation of Bassoons and of String Basses is heard in all three times (either at the original pitch or at the pitch of five notes higher), and it is permeated by what in the score of the music to the play, and also that of the Suite, are given as Horn notes (marked by a cross to be hand-stopped=*cuivré*=brassy); in this version a stroke on the Bell is, with some advantage perhaps, added).

Next the VIOLINS, in octaves, *pizzicato*, take the same tune, alternating with the OBOES and CLARINETS in octaves. In effect they repeat the three alternations of the previous section.

The speed and force have now begun to increase, and soon the FULL ORCHESTRA is engaged, wildly playing the same tune. (With it, in the play, enters a 'Chorus of Trolls', crying, as they drive Peer about the Hall, *Knock him down ! Knock him down !*)

The piece ends with a Kettledrum roll and a crash (on the Columbia Record made, I think, insufficiently alarmingly crashing).

'THE DEATH OF ASE.'

Notice the simple construction of this beautiful piece of music (there is a chart of it in *The Listener's Guide to Music*).

The first eight bars give out the chief subject ; the second eight bars repeat it five notes higher (*i.e.*, the former Soh has become the new Doh) ; the third eight bars repeat it an octave higher (*i.e.*, in the old key).

So far, then we have been rising all the way, and, as we have done so, the music, which began very softly, has swelled out louder and louder. Now we have reached our highest point, and begin to descend in the same way (but by four-bar passages, instead of eight-bar passages), the music all the time becoming softer again, until it ends as softly as it began.

The piece should be entirely played by MUTED STRINGS, and the late Professor Prout, in his book on Orchestration, particularly called attention to the unusual effect here of a *fortissimo* so played—as it is in the middle of the piece. Neither H.M.V. nor Columbia gives Muted String tone.

'MORNING MOOD.'

As regards its material, the piece falls into three parts, the musical subject matter of each of them being a quite short phrase, in the first part of four bars long, in the second

part of six. It is notable how, in almost all these pieces, Grieg proceeds almost entirely by repetition and re-repetition of material, some little subtlety in its treatment always preventing the feeling of monotony. In every one of them he is representing a mood ; he chooses, or is 'inspired with', a musical *motif* that 'pictures' that mood, and he perpetuates the mood by a continual use of the phrase that in its effect perhaps distantly approaches the hypnotic.

(1) The musical *motif* of the *First Section* of the piece is the FLUTE tune heard at its opening (Clarinets and Bassoons accompanying).

This is immediately responded to an octave lower by OBOE (Strings accompanying—observe the three-note *motif* in the Violas which occupies the gap between the end of the Flute version and the beginning of the Oboe version).

The FLUTE now repeats the tune three notes higher than before (Clarinets and Bassoons accompanying as before—observe the three-note connecting *motif*, now given to Bassoon).

OBOE now repeats the tune three notes higher than before (Strings again accompany—introduced again by the three-note *motif*).

FLUTE and OBOE now respond with a shorter passage (as a matter of fact it is the second bar of the preceding longer phrase).

Immediately they respond again with a still shorter passage (in effect, the first half of the passage they have just played).

ALL STRINGS (except Double Basses), in octaves, give out the first long phrase (Wood Wind and Horns and Double Basses accompanying).

They then repeat this, a note higher, and continue it by three repetitions of a figure from it, rising a note in each.

(2) The *Second Section* now opens. VIOLINS break into an arpeggio motion, of double the previous rate, and the 'CELLO, underneath, carries on a suave melody. To the

Wind chords are now added Trumpets (their first appearance).

(3) The *Third Section* soon comes ; it is a varied repetition of the First.

A HORN plays the original melody (accompaniment of Wood Wind arpeggios, with Strings *pizzicato* ; it appears, however, that in the recorded version a Harp has been added here).

OBOE, BASSOON and 'CELLO take over the melody and slightly extend it (Arpeggios given to Strings, bowed ; Harp still active ; Horn chords and soft drum-roll added).

The HORN links this passage to the next by a solo note or two.

STRINGS, very softly and quite alone, begin the melody, assuming, however, in a bar or two, the role of accompaniment, whilst CLARINET very beautifully continues the melody, ending it with a liquid bird-like trill.

FLUTE TRILLS, with some lovely OBOE and HORN CHORDS as accompaniment, succeed.

Then CLARINET repeats its last phraselet, with Strings accompanying as before. Similar alternations continue for a few moments.

There comes a break ; then HORNS play a solemn chord or two ('Cellos and Basses plucking a note or two below them).

FLUTE gives out the first half of the original melody (low String accompaniment).

BASSOON does the same (low Wood and Horn accompaniment). Harp again seems to be added.

With soft, widespread chords the piece ends.

' SOLVEIG'S SONG.'

(Only included in the Columbia Record.)

As indicated above, this occurs in two forms in the score of the music to the play ; first, an orchestral form, and second, a vocal form. It is naturally the orchestral

form which is included in the Suite, but it follows the vocal form very closely.¹

At the opening MUTED STRINGS alone are heard. Then the song-melody creeps in, in STRINGS supported by HARP and with occasional Wood Wind chords.

As the first section of this ends, and the mode changes to the major, and the time to triple, the melody heard (a call to the goats) is, in the song-version, vocalised to 'Ah' (it reminds one a little of Swiss jodelling).

The Song section and the vocalised section, minor and major, 4/4 and 3/4, then alternate.

(In this version as heard from the Record, the Wood Wind, which in the full score of the incidental music to the play, and also that of the Suite, has a purely accompanimental function, is often, with debatable effect, given the privilege of carrying the melody.)

'ANITRA'S DANCE.'

This is given entirely to STRINGS (properly with a Triangle, which appears to be absent on the present occasion).

The tune is given to FIRST VIOLINS *bowed* (later occasionally to other instruments, notably 'Cellos); accompanying instruments are played *pizzicato*.

There is just the required suggestion of the Oriental.

HOW THE PEER GYNT MUSIC WAS COMPOSED.

In 1916, in a special Grieg edition of *The Music Student*, a journal of which I was then Editor, I republished an article by the Composer's widow, who kindly gave me permission in the following words: 'I am very pleased

¹ Readers who wish to possess this vocal version can obtain it as Col. L. 1458-12, sung by Dora Labbette, with Orchestra, in English; or, as H.M.V. D.B. 534, sung by Tetrzzini in Italian; it also exists as A.V. D. 02070, sung by Destournel, but this Record has merely pianoforte accompaniment.

with your intention My husband loved the English public, and I believe that they also loved him'. The article originally appeared in a Copenhagen paper, *Treatret*, whose Editor also most kindly gave me permission to republish, and was translated into flexible English by Miss I. M. Pagan, of Edinburgh. To all these kind friends I offer my best acknowledgements here, pleased as I am to give a more permanent form to a description of the conditions of work of the composer, which is not, I believe, to be found in any of the books upon Grieg. Here begins the article.

If you ask me when the music of *Peer Gynt* was actually composed, I cannot tell you. Look for that in the biographies! But *how* was it composed? Well, so many curious factors are at work in the brain of an artist, that sometimes the process is pretty much what is suggested in the old folk-song:

And this ballad has thus got a soul for itself
And comes gaily tobogganning down on a plank.

The primary cause that moved Grieg to write the music of *Peer Gynt* was Henrik Ibsen. A letter arrived from him one fine morning, asking whether Grieg would lend a hand in preparing the piece for the theatre. He was completely taken aback, for it had never entered his head that a play so philosophical and so strongly tinged with Ibsen's scepticism could possibly be produced. So for several days he wandered up and down, full of doubt and anxiety, and very nervous at the thought of embarking on so great a task. But after he had gone more deeply into the poem, so colossal in its outlines, the conviction seized him that this particular work, with its witchery and its wildness, its maidens and its swine (those creatures of his early days), with its intensely Norwegian flavour and its general air of 'Hi! come along!' was the very thing for him, and he speedily became so enthusiastic about the undertaking,

that he simply longed to set to work, if only he could find a suitable place to work in.

We were staying that summer with my father-in-law and mother-in-law, in Sandviken, a little suburban place near Bergen, and had no settled home of our own, and when Grieg was out for a walk, and caught sight of some little cottage snugly situated in a sequestered spot, or anything of that kind, he had a way of breaking out with a sudden : 'Oh !—the luck to be allowed to work in such a place !' And once, during these long summer days, as we were wandering about in the open, the fantastic doings of the Trolls continually running riot in his head, we chanced upon a bungalow built high up on a little hill, far from any human habitation, with windows looking in every possible direction and a glorious view out over the sea on one side, and far away to the mountains on the other. After that Grieg had no peace. *That* was the place for his work, where neither the Trolls nor the old man of the Dovre would ever be scared away by multitudes of men, or the 'cattle of the black coat'; and where there was a grand wide 'Peer Gyntish' sort of an outlook. We made prompt enquiries about the owner of the bungalow. Grieg put all his energy into the business, as he always did when there was anything really at stake, and in a few days he had leave to take possession, had a piano carried up, and set to work, glowing with enthusiasm and full of interest in the theme.

I do not remember how much of the *Peer Gynt* music was written that summer, but I know that it was Solveig's first song that saw the light earliest of all, and the bright summer evening up there on the hill top, when we played and sang it together for the first time, will live for ever in my memory. Grieg himself with a humorous smile called the song 'A Public Lamp'. And in a way he was right there, for wherever his name is known, Solveig's Song (and also, of course, *I love thee, dear*) stand in the front rank of his representative achievements. A striking evidence

of this was given us once when we were staying in an hotel up in Semmering. A number of peasants came in from the mountains with their zithers, and before we knew what they were about, had set to work to play Solveig's Song. When things of that kind happened on our travels (and how often they did!) they stirred Grieg so strangely that he used to turn quite pale, and would murmur softly: 'Can you understand it?' For in his innermost nature he was full of humility, and the words of Vinje, our old Norse-dialect poet: 'I've got more than I ever earned', were often on his lips. Even Grieg's father, who was inclined to reserve his judgment as to the direction in which his son's music was tending, and considered it the 'Music of the Future', quite fell in love with the song, and I remember that a few days before he died, we had to throw open the doors between the room where he lay and the sitting-room in which the piano stood, so that he might listen to Solveig's Song once more.¹

Autumn followed, and Grieg, grateful for the shelter he had found for himself and his art, was eager to discover some way of giving pleasure to the old man who had met his wishes so hospitably. He wrote asking him to accept the dedication of the work that had come into existence on his domain; but got a douche of cold water in the reply that begged him, 'for God's sake, not to set him in the pillory in that fashion'.

Time went on, and the composition came to an end, but the instrumentation still lagged behind. On one of our summer flights to Denmark (the beloved land of our happy youth!) we went to Fredensborg, to pay a visit to our

¹ Here I must be allowed ruefully to admit that it is rather amateurish and singer-like of me to have spoken so much of this song in preference to the rest of the music, which was spread abroad in much the same way, drifting like smoke into all sorts of corners. Grieg himself found most satisfaction in *Ase's Death*, *The Morning Mood*, *Solveig's last song*, and the scene with the thread balls, leaves, etc., which last is unfortunately hardly ever done on the stage. (Mrs. Grieg's note.)

dear friends, August and Clara Winding. They were just starting on a journey, and we got permission to stay in their apartments, which were quite in the country and absolutely idyllic, with a view across the Esrom Sea. In the calm of these surroundings Grieg sat diligently at his writing table, busy over the instrumentation of his music to *Peer Gynt*. An old Danish friend of mine, who passed the window very often, and always saw him bending over his work, said to me quite naïvely: 'You may be very glad, my child, that you have such a husband; one who sits at his work from morning to night, instead of going off to the club to play cards!' I must say that that point of view had never even occurred to me. It had always seemed so much a matter of course that Grieg should be sitting steadily at his work.

And then came the day when he sat there no longer. But *Peer Gynt* went on its triumphal way, and has arrived at length in the theatre in the King's New Market, where Johannes Poulson in the heyday of his youth, is charming us all with the jollity of his wild fantastic flights into the realm of fairy-lore, and where Grieg's music, rendered with such reverent understanding and real inspiration by George Høeberg, is taking its rightful place in the very foremost ranks of achievement.¹

In thankfulness and admiration, I bow my head.

Two large Columbia Light Blue Records. L. 1516-7, each 7s. 6d.

Two large H.M.V. Black Records. D. 156-7, each 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Augener. Full Score of the whole of the Music to the Play, 30s.; Full Scores, Suite I, 12s., Suite II, 15s.; Piano Solo arrangements, Suite I, 2s., Suite II, 4s.; Piano Duet, each Suite, 4s.

¹ The fine performances at London's 'Old Vic', in 1922, will be recalled by many readers. In 1925, at Oxford, the University Dramatic Society gave a week of excellent performances.

RECORDS Nos. 21 and 22

Orchestral Tone Poem *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* . R. Strauss

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Albert Coates)

It is usual, and I think also just, to say that of all the Tone Poems of Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* is the best.

To begin with, it is nearly all good music. To follow, it is nearly all excellent characterisation.

If composers *must* write closely planned 'programme music' (and I for one am not enormously anxious that they should) this is the kind that they ought to write.

Till gets all the eulogies. Says the American, Daniel Gregory Mason¹:

'It combines the observation of a Swift with the sympathetic imagination of a Thackeray. Beneath its turbulent surface of fun is a deep sense of pathos, of the fragmentariness and fleetingness of *Till*, for all his pranks; so that to the sensitive it may easily bring tears as well as smiles. Above all, it has that largeness of vision, rarest of artistic qualities, which not only penetrates from appearance to feeling, but grasps feeling in all its relations, presents a unified picture of life, and purges the emotions as the Greek tragedy aimed to do. All is suffused in beauty. The prologue: "Once upon a time there was a man," and the epilogue: "Thus it happened to *Till Eulenspiegel*," make a complete cycle of the work, and remove its expression to a philosophic or poetic plane high above mere crude realism. There are doubtless more impressive single passages in later works, but it may be doubted if anything Strauss has ever written is more perfect or more tender than this wittiest of pieces, in which the wit is yet forgotten in the beauty.'

Says Ernest Newman²:

'In *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894-5) the form is again developed with consummate cleverness; the eloquent and witty transformations of the original themes interest us both by their purely musical quality and by the vividness with which they suggest this or that aspect of the hero of the poem. It has been frequently pointed out that Strauss's form

¹ *Contemporary Composers*, Macmillan, 1918, 10s.

² *Richard Strauss*, John Lane, 1908, 3s. 6d.

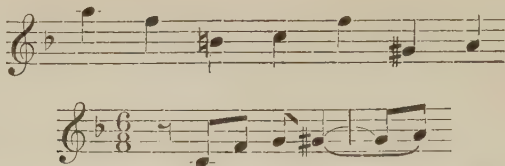
always has a peculiar appositeness to his subject. The adventures of Till Eulenspiegel are best told in rondo form ; the form of a theme with a series of variations is the one most suited to *Don Quixote* ; and there are similar reasons, rooted in the nature of the scenes or the moods that have to be painted, for the forms of all the other orchestral works from *Macbeth* to the *Symphonia Domestica*. In *Till Eulenspiegel* the thematic development is carried on with an ease and a copiousness of invention that are a constant delight to the musician ; while the whole work glows with good spirits and rings with kindly laughter. Strauss's comedy here sounds a more generally agreeable note than anywhere else, except in parts of *Don Quixote*. After the latter work his comic sense acquires an unpleasantly acid taste ; in *Ein Heldenleben*, for example, he has lost the art of tolerant laughter, and can only grin and grimace unpleasantly and rather savagely at the follies of mankind. In *Till Eulenspiegel*, in fact, all the components of his nature are still held in an approximate balance. After this, while he deepens notably in some respects, touches some sublime heights of feeling, and sounds some extraordinary depths, the general balance of his work is upset. The impish side of his temperament gets more and more out of his control, and he is increasingly inclined to overcrowd the programmes of his symphonic poems with literary or pictorial ideas that are generally beyond the power of music to express.'

Even in *Till* there are, I think, some few dull pages (*e.g.*, those four or five beginning with page 29 in the miniature score, but then these are intended to bring before us a band of learned professors, whose legs Till is pulling), yet the themes are all good, the treatment is generally subtle and effective, and the orchestration is extraordinarily able. In *Till*, then, as aforesaid, we find Strauss at his best, and it is a satisfaction to be able to see him represented by this particular work in the present book.

When Dr. Wüllner, in 1895, was preparing to give the first performance of this work (at a Gürzenich concert in Cologne) he asked the composer of it for an explanation of its 'programmatic' basis, and did not get much for his pains. Still, what he did get is worth quoting :

'It is impossible for me to furnish a programme to *Eulenspiegel* ; were I to put into words the thoughts which its several incidents suggested to me, they would seldom suffice and might even give rise to offence. Let me leave it, therefore, to my hearers to " crack the hard nut " which

the Rogue has provided for them. By way of helping them to a better understanding, it seems sufficient to point out the two Eulenspiegel motifs:



which in the most manifold disguises, moods and situations pervade the whole up to the catastrophe when, after he has been condemned to death (a descending major seventh—F to G flat), Till is strung up to the gibbet. For the rest, let them guess at the musical joke which a Rogue has offered them.'

Programme annotators have gone farther than the composer in their attribution of a literary or pictorial sense to various passages in the music. Searching the book of the adventures of the legendary thirteenth century hero-humorist, *Till Eulenspiegel* (who in Queen Elizabeth's day and since has been well enough known in this country as Till Owleglass) the critics have found a number of incidents which can with plausibility be scribbled into the score as explanatory of its various passages. They see, as the music proceeds, Till riding through the market place and upsetting the stalls, Till in a monk's habit preaching, Till in love (and unfortunate in it), and Till playing tricks upon the University professors.

One thing they all agree upon (and those of us who heard the music before ever we read anything about it have, I think, at once felt the same) is that the opening few bars represent a sort of 'Here beginneth the story of Till Eulenspiegel—a creature, remember, of human feelings like your own', and the similar bars at the end, a sort of Epilogue 'Here endeth the story of Till Eulenspiegel—a rogue if you like, but a human creature like the rest of us'.

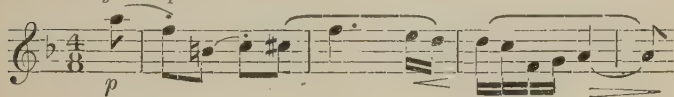
Note that these bars are suffused with a quiet pensiveness ; Strauss is in this Tone Poem not merely the humorist ;

he is the humanist also. That, indeed, is where he scores most decidedly. In *Hero's Life*, *Don Quixote*, *Don Juan* and other works, he has tried to be clever and has fallen into vulgar commonplace; with Till he is really in sympathy, and his cleverness is sublimated.

The two opening themes, expressive plainly of two sides of Till's character, have already been quoted. This is the actual form in which they, at the outset, appear:

The pensive Till (VIOLINS):

At a gentle speed.



The freakish Till (HORN, with Violin tremolo accompaniment; then HORN again, then OBOES, then CLARINETS, then BASSOONS, VIOLAS and 'CELLOS, working up to FULL ORCHESTRA):

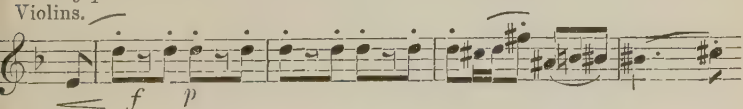
Gradually quicker.



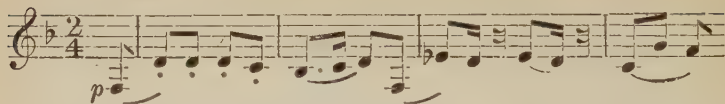
Other important themes, to be well noted, since their treatment makes up a large part of the score, are these:

Very quick.

Violins.

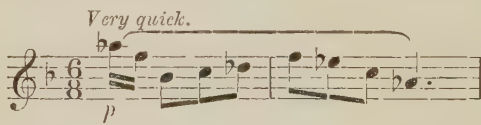


This, and the passage which grows out of it, say commentators, represent Till's exploit in the market place, his furious riding and upsetting of stalls and alarming of market women.

At a gentle speed.

This, and the Haydnish passage which grows out of it, is, for some reason, thought by the commentators to represent the supposed monk Till, preaching his mock-sermon (Violas, Bassoons and Clarinets give a dark colouring to the tune).

We now turn the Record and come, it is supposed, to Till in love. Obviously no man's biography is complete without a love passage. Queen Elizabeth, it is said, asked to see Falstaff in love, and got *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as a professed attempt to comply with this demand—which it certainly does not. Strauss has got nearer to meeting our demands in the case of Till. After a passage made out of the first Till *motif*, in which he seems to see the hero as far from comfortable under the first rain of Cupid's darts, he takes this *motif*, gives it a flowing three-to-a-beat rhythm, and sets the sufferer at ease :



Or he takes that same first Till theme and out of it fashions repeated ardent protestations, whilst underneath the second Till theme, with a yearning leap introduced into it, runs in combination (rather difficult to catch, in this Record, at the speed at which it passes).

 A musical score for multiple instruments. The top staff is for '1st Violins.' and the middle staff is for '2nd Vlns, 1st Vlns., etc.' Both are marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The bottom staff is for 'Cellos.' and is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation shows the first Till theme (a half note) and the second Till theme (a triplet of eighth notes) played in combination.

Or he re-shapes this later theme again, and marks it *love-glowing* or *liebeglühend* (Violin, Flute and Clarinet) :



Soon we reach the incident of the fooling of the dry old professors, above mentioned (represented by gruff BASSOONS, DOUBLE BASSOON and BASS CLARINET) :



Then he jauntily leaves these men of learning, whistling as he does so (just after the change of Record) a brief snatch of a jaunty street tune :



A dignified transformation of the second Till *motif* has been spoken of as 'Till at the height of his glory' :



At last (just as we turn the Record) comes retribution. Till is arrested (KETTLEDRUM) ; he is led before the judges (HORNS, TROMBONES and STRINGS with DRUMS) ; he repeatedly protests his innocence and pleads for life (SMALL CLARINET) ; the judges cut him short ponderously every time ; the

sentence is pronounced ; Till is hanged (drop of a seventh in BRASS, BASSOON and DOUBLE BASSOON, followed by the departing of the soul in a Flute trill).

Then follows the touching Epilogue already mentioned, and all ends.

Till Eulenspiegel, is scored for a large orchestra : 3 Flutes and Piccolo, 3 Oboes and Cor Anglais, Small Clarinet, 2 normal Clarinets and Bass Clarinet, 3 Bassoons and Double Bassoon, 4 Horns (and another 4 *ad lib.*), 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, Bass Tuba, Kettledrums, Triangle, Cymbals, Big Drum, Small Drum, a big Rattle, 16 each of First and Second Violins, 12 each of Violas and 'Cellos, and 8 Double Bases.

I will not swear that absolutely all these instruments in just these proportions were present in the recording room when this reproduction was made, but it is a faithful and effective reproduction, nevertheless, and, indeed, I recommend it as one of the most enjoyable orchestral reproductions at present available.

A word further about the form of the piece. E. N., above, calls it a Rondo, and the full title is : *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche ; nach alter Schelmenweise—in Rondeauform* : or *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks ; after the old Rogue-manner—in Rondo form*. A Rondo, properly speaking, is a composition in which some main musical theme keeps returning. Here, necessarily the two Till *motifs* are again and again woven into the fabric, but that does not constitute Rondo Form, in the usual sense of the words, and the description the composer has given it should not mislead listeners into expecting something they will not hear.

A comment upon the almost unchanged pitch of the recurring *motif* may be quoted. It occurs in the volume of Daniel Gregory Mason already cited.

' Why is it that we so seldom hear the four tones of Till Eulenspiegel's main theme on any other degrees of the scale than A, F, B, C ? Why is it that, in spite of the constant movement from key to key in the music, this theme is hardly ever carried also into the new key ? Why does

Strauss so insist on this A, F, B, C, not only when the music is in F major, but when, as at Till's anger, it is in D minor, when, as in the procession of the burghers, it is in A minor, and when, just before the return of the main theme, it is in C major? Why always A, F, B, C, whatever the key? Is it not because Till, half-witted, perverse, self-imprisoned, is not subject to social influences, and remains unplastically himself, whatever his environment? To transpose a theme into the key prevailing at the moment is to make order—but Till represents disorder Such at least is the ingenious explanation of a woman who understands character as well as Strauss understands keys.'

That, perhaps, is a little fanciful; at all events, the device suggested, to be effective, would have to depend upon a far more widespread 'sense of absolute pitch' than exists amongst our public.

Now something further as to the literary programme of this piece. In my judgment the sequence of ideas which has been suggested above by Strauss, his commentators and myself is as much as most listeners can make use of, but it is fair to admit that some time after the first performance of the piece the composer decided upon a fuller revelation than he had previously been willing to give. It is quoted in Niecks' *Programme Music* (Novello, 1906, 16s.), as compiled from a series of pencil marks entered in a score given by Strauss to the Munich critic and composer, Wilhelm Mauke:

'(1) Prologue. "Once upon a time there was a rogue." (2) Of the name of "Till Eulenspiegel". (3) That was a mischievous sprite. (4) Away for new pranks. (5) Wait! you hypocrite! (6) Hop! on horse-back through the midst of the market women! (7) With seven-league boots he makes off. (8) Hidden in a mouse-hole. (9) Disguised as a pastor he overflows with unction and morality. (10) But the rogue peeps out from the great toe. (11) Before the end, however, a secret horror takes hold of him on account of the mockery of religion. (12) Till as cavalier exchanging tender civilities with pretty girls. (13) With one of them he has really fallen in love. (14) He proposes to her. (15) A polite refusal is nevertheless a refusal. (16) [Turns away in a rage.]¹ (17) Swears to take vengeance on the whole human race. (18) Philistine

¹ I do not understand the force of the square brackets here, but reproduce them as Niecks gives them.

motive. (19) After proposing to the Philistines a couple of monstrous theses, he abandons the dumbfounded ones to their fate. (20) Great grimace from afar. (21) Till's *Gassenhauer* (vulgar street song). (22) [Watched by catch-poles, and collared by the bailiff.]* (23) The judgment. (24) He whistles to himself with indifference. (25) Up the ladder ! There he is swinging, his breath has gone out, a last quiver. All that is mortal of Till is ended. (26) [Epilogue. What is immortal, his humour, remains.]'

To this, says Niecks, has to be added only one remark, namely, that the Straussian commentators hold that the composer had more in his mind than he confessed in the above, that he aimed at something higher than the mere illustration of a rogue's pranks.

This, it will be observed, is a mere amplification of what has already been given. Some enthusiastic readers may care to busy themselves in finding all the passages alluded to. I offer no prize !

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RECORDS Nos. 23, 24, and 25

Orchestral Suite . . . *Nutcracker* . . . Tchaikovsky

1. Miniature Overture
2. Characteristic Dances
 - (a) March
 - (b) Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
 - (c) Russian Dance—Trepak
 - (d) Arab Dance
 - (e) Chinese Dance
 - (f) Reed-Pipe Dance

3. Flower Valse

ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Sir Landon Ronald)

When the Directors of the Imperial Opera House at St. Petersburg commissioned Tchaikovsky to write the music to a Ballet, *The Nutcracker* (founded on Hofmann's tale *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*), he was not pleased, for he did not like the subject. And when the public heard the music of the Ballet (December, 1892) they did not much care for it :

'The Ballet—admirably conducted by Drigo—was brilliantly staged, and received with considerable applause ; yet the impression left by the first night was not wholly favourable. The subject, which differed greatly from the conventional ballet programme, was not entirely to blame. The illness of the talented ballet-master, Petipa, and the substitution of a man of far less skill and imagination, probably accounted for the comparative failure of the work. The delicate beauty of the music did not appeal to the public on a first hearing, and some time elapsed before the *Nutcracker* became a favourite item in the repertory.'¹

The composer, morbidly sensitive as he was, was much hurt, though he said he wasn't :

'This is the fourth day on which all the papers have been cutting up both my latest creations. . . . It is not the first time. The abuse

¹ *The Life and Letters of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky*. By Modeste Tchaikovsky. Edited from the Russian, with an Introduction, by Rosa Newmarch. John Lane, 1906, 15s.

does not annoy me in the least, and yet, as always under these circumstances, I am in a hateful frame of mind. When one has lived in expectation of an important event, as soon as it is over there comes a kind of apathy and disinclination for work, while the emptiness and futility of all our efforts becomes so evident.'

Yet as an orchestral suite (in which alternative form he had re-arranged the music before the Ballet performance) the public had thoroughly enjoyed the music, encoring five out of the six pieces of which the Suite then apparently consisted. The explanation of this change of attitude I cannot suggest. One would have thought that any public at any time would have enjoyed music at once so piquant and so wholesome.

Before we leave these introductory considerations, let me quote once more from Tchaikovsky's letters.

'I have discovered a new instrument in Paris, something between a piano and a *Glockenspiel*, with a divinely beautiful tone. I want to introduce this into the ballet and the symphonic poem.¹ The instrument is called the "Celesta Mustel," and costs 1,200 francs. You can only buy it from the inventor, Mustel, in Paris. I want to ask you to order one of these instruments. You will not lose by it because you can hire it out to the concerts at which *The Voyevode* will be played, and afterwards sell it to the Opera when my ballet is put on. . . . Have it sent direct to Petersburg; but no one there must know about it. I am afraid Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazounov might hear of it and make use of the new effect before I could. I expect the instrument will make a tremendous sensation.'

The new instrument duly appeared in the Ballet score—in the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, where, of course, it makes an excellent effect.

MINIATURE OVERTURE.

This is laid out in the classical Overture form, with its two Subjects, in the Tonic and Dominant keys, their Exposition and their Recapitulation. But it is only a toy

¹ *The Voyevode*, on which he was then engaged.

Overture after all. Note the instruments: 2 Flutes, 1 Piccolo, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns, Triangle, Violins and Violas, and no 'Cellos or Double Basses. In other words, no adults are admitted, except the Bassoons, and they only on the condition of emitting none of their gruffer, bass-er notes.

Play the piece through first for Subject matter. The dainty opening tune is the *First Subject*; it has a second part, which begins with rapid notes on the FLUTE.

The *Second Subject* is the later tune, which begins in a smooth singing style, in some of the VIOLINS, whilst the other Violins and Violas pluck their strings, instead of bowing them.

We hear both these tunes (or all three of them if you like) in the Exposition; then comes an intermediate passage that runs on continuously, and is so slight that we hardly speak of 'Development'; and then, in the Recapitulation, we hear these two (or three) tunes again, and work on to a conclusion.

Now for the Orchestration. As already stated, there are no 'Cellos and Basses. But the Violins are divided into four, Violas into two.

The *First Section* of the *First Subject* (a sort of left-right fairy marching tune) is first heard as a series of crisp chords, and then at once repeated with an added rapid feathery counterpoint from some of the Violas.

Then comes the *Second Section* of the *First Subject*, in which first FLUTE, and next CLARINET (an octave lower) have a rapid figure to carry out.

A passing antiphonal treatment of a little down-the-scale *motif* by First Violin, on one side of the choir, and Flutes in octaves in the other, is followed by a short *crescendo* for Strings alone, which leads into—

The *First Section* of the *First Subject* again, this time in the WIND department, with a running thread of *staccato* semiquavers from the VIOLINS.

A bar or two of chromatic harmony for Strings (Oboes holding long notes above) then leads in the—

Second Subject, in which the FIRST VIOLINS sing a melody, all the other Violins and Violas supplying a *pizzicato* accompaniment.

Then this passage is repeated, the FIRST and SECOND VIOLINS now playing the melody in octaves, whilst Oboes, Clarinets and Violas (to which Flutes are later added) accompany.

Soon the whole force mentioned at the opening of this description is playing together, all except the Triangle—and even that joins in before long.

Then comes the *First Subject* again, this time given to STRINGS and WOOD, and then to Violins with the feathery counterpoint in the Violas, and occasional Wood Wind touches. The Recapitulation then proceeds, much like the Exposition, and the piece at length ends with all the force possible to this somewhat limited body of instruments.

Both playing and recording are throughout the Overture excellent.

MARCH.

This, in the original Ballet, accompanies the assembling of the wedding guests.

'Cellos and Basses, 2 Trumpets, 3 Trombones and Tuba and Cymbals (also 2 more Horns) are added to the Orchestra of the Overture.

At the opening, a military band effect—CLARINETS and BRASS alone.

Then STRINGS, lively, with Bassoons adding a (necessarily barely perceptible) drooping *motif* of their own in slower notes. ('Cellos and Basses pluck.)

This passage is then closed with a loud chord, but, irrepressible, at once starts again.

Again the loud chord, and then a couple of bars for TRUMPETS, TROMBONES and TUBA (the last-named now, and whenever this passage is repeated, playing his final note

slightly out of tune, so that one marvels that the conductor did not throw his baton at him, smash the record, so far as it had gone, and start again).

Then a couple of bars for FLUTES and CLARINETS accompanied by Violas and 'Cellos *pizzicato*; followed by a passage in which Clarinets, Bassoons and Trumpets and Trombones come down the scale, so leading in again the—

Main Subject of the opening, as before. This time, however, after the second of the two loud chords, we pass into the *Middle Section* of the piece (for it is in three sections, First, Second and First again).

Here we have a rapid stuttering *motif* first in FLUTES and PICCOLO and a CLARINET, then in VIOLINS and VIOLAS, and so on.

All this is very briefly treated and the *First Section* soon opens again, this time embellished with soda-water fizzes, contrived by adding to the march tune (in Wind as before) a rapid, upward scale *motif*, handed from lowermost Strings up to uppermost, and finished off every time by a downward Flute arpeggio.

So the piece proceeds to the end; there are no new features.

This is a pleasant and humorous little thing, though, I think, not of the same musical value as the Overture.

DANCE OF THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRY.

The instruments here are 3 Flutes, 2 Oboes and Cor Anglais, 2 Clarinets and Bass Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns, Celesta and Strings.

The Celesta is the most important instrument; in fact we might almost call this a miniature Concerto for Celesta (with a Cadenza, all complete, by the way).

The piece opens with *pizzicato* STRINGS (in this instance played with a curiously limping effect).

Then enters the CELESTA with the Tune.

Then comes a little tumbling *motif* in BASS CLARINET.

Later the ordinary CLARINET, in its low register, enters with the same *motif*.

Little more description need be given, except perhaps the remark that the passage that strikes the listener as most unusual in its colouring is probably that where two HORNS carry a slow figure, and COR ANGLAIS a quicker one above, and VIOLAS embroider on to this slender fabric a triplet repeated-note figure. Also, perhaps, that a passage where Celesta is accompanied by rapid, light, *staccato* Strings is worthy of notice.

TREPAK.

This is just a short, vigorous dance, entirely for Full Orchestra. It is all over in a flash.

ARAB DANCE.

The oriental flavour is cleverly obtained. The basis is simplicity of construction, and a thin texture, with a persistent drone-bass.

This last is of the interval of a fifth, given during the earlier part of the piece to 'CELLOS and VIOLAS, and in the latter part of the piece to DOUBLE BASSES and 'CELLOS.

Above this drone-bass are heard slow languorous melodies by instruments as follows :

CLARINETS and COR ANGLAIS

VIOLINS, parallel, a third apart

BASSOONS and COR ANGLAIS

VIOLINS, parallel, a third apart (Bassoons continuing below)

CLARINETS and COR ANGLAIS

OBOE (high) with VIOLINS and VIOLAS, low and parallel, a third apart

COR ANGLAIS, VIOLINS and VIOLAS

CLARINET

The score is occasionally thickened a little by adding some long holding-note, or slight counter-melody in one

of the Wood Wind instruments, but these extra touches are not very much noticed by the listener.

Occasionally the TAMBOURINE has a rapid little "Thumb-roll" which can be clearly heard.

Brass and Kettledrum are entirely absent from the score.

This is a piece of very characteristic colour—quite a success I think.

CHINESE DANCE.

This is very comical. Two BASSOONS, with *pizzicato* DOUBLE BASSES, persist in rhythmically reiterating a chord, somewhat as the drone-bass was reiterated in the previous piece.

High above this, FLUTE (sometimes with Piccolo doubling it an octave still higher) executes stunts, in the shape of swoops and swirls.

The whole body of Strings 'pizzicatoes' an alternating snatch of tune.

In other places CLARINETS (rather faintly) arpeggio one. Towards the end the GLOCKENSPIEL chimes in—a good deal too reticently, in this Record, but I think it is there.

As the 'Prom' programme annually puts it, 'The movement breaks off with an abruptness which suggests that someone's boot accelerated the departure of the Chinese musicians'.

REED PIPE DANCE.

The score gives this a French name: *Danse des Mirlitons*. It is a graceful little thing of no great value.

The use of THREE FLUTES playing a pleasant little melody, mostly in parallel thirds and sixths, over a low *pizzicato* String accompaniment, is a feature of the piece, which, indeed, opens in this very way.

After a bar or two a BASSOON may be heard to creep in with a slow counter-melody.

A little later the COR ANGLAIS does the same, with another short counter-melody.

Just after this, whilst the THREE FLUTES do a little chromatic climb, the STRINGS (taking up their bows at last, except 'Cellos and Basses, who continue *pizzicato*) all set off sliding down the diatonic scale, and then take to playing arpeggios and similar figures of accompaniment whilst the FLUTES continue their gay and amusing antics.

Before long Flutes and Strings retire and leave the field to BRASS alone, the Trumpets playing a rapid repeated-note tune, whilst their companions accompany in a 'short-leg and long-leg' gait.

In this passage the STRINGS and WOOD soon join, Wood and lower Strings attaching themselves to the accompaniment, and upper Strings to the Trumpet tune.

The small amount of matter remaining is a repetition of what has already been heard.

FLOWER VALSE.

This is the standard article—an ordinary good Valse of the rather commonplace kind. It is not so lightly played as it should be, and the balance of Wind and Strings and of the various Wind Instruments amongst themselves is not very delicate. The recording, as it stands, will no doubt satisfy many listeners, but it is not up to the standard of the preceding numbers and a re-recording of this one would enhance the value of the whole set.

There are some omissions—of no great importance, musically considered. The reader who has the full score before him should mark it according to the following instructions :

The Introduction and the Sydney-Smith-like Harp Cadenza are intact.

This Cadenza ended, two bars of the following four bars of 'pom-pom' prelude to the Waltz proper should be deleted.

We then go straight ahead until we reach letter B in the score. Here occurs a 'cut'.

At D we resume, observing the repeat and so continue until E is reached. Here we make a jump to G, whence we go straight forward to K (ignoring, however, the repeat that occurs).

After K we continue for 12 bars, when we make a jump of 16 bars and so come straight into the concluding passage of the Valse.

Now for the orchestration. At the outset we have HORNS, OBOES, CLARINETS and BASSOONS alone, interspersed with Harp arpeggios of a quite unexpressive character.

Then comes the HARP CADENZA, already slightly disrespectfully alluded to.

The lower Strings then give out the typical Waltz accompaniment figure, already spoken of, and, over this, the HORNS soon bring in a Waltz tune (of which the Introduction gives us a foretaste) in full Harmony for Horns.

A CLARINET continues the tune, in a running style, and Horns and Clarinet alternate in this style for a time.

A new tune now begins in STRINGS, CLARINETS and FLUTES (with concomitants) interposing with a pleasant twiddly-bit, and Trombone, Horns and Harps helping unobtrusively to thicken the body of the tone.

Soon OBOE (with Flute an octave above only faintly heard) comes in with a continuation of the tune, a few strings accompanying with scale passages (Harp and Clarinets and Bassoons thickening the accompanimental mixture with chords).

Then the roles are reversed. VIOLINS take over the tune, and Wood Wind runs the scaly counterpoint.

From this point to the end what is heard is either repetition of what has gone before or very like it in style and orchestration.

At the conclusion, naturally, all the orchestra is engaged.

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RECORDS Nos. 26 and 27

Pianoforte Concerto . *Symphonic Variations* . César Franck

ARTHUR DE GREEF and THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Sir Landon Ronald)

I do not recommend this as a perfect Record, though I consider it well worth inclusion in this book.

Let me mention its imperfections first. De Greef's playing, though here generally admirable, occasionally errs by over-accentuation of an unaccented note or chord, and once or twice also, when occupied with fancy dressings, upon a main theme in some other instrument, so covers this latter, that it can barely be distinguished. Then all the *pizzicato* string chords (which are fairly frequent) are played or recorded with a somewhat dry, unresonant tone. And the Wind instruments are sometimes rather coarse.

So much for the debit side. On the credit side it may be admitted that the piece is recorded whole, that there are no 'cuts' whatever, and that the whole performance goes through with considerable verve.

And, in any case, this is a typical piece of its composer. The Franck melody, the Franck harmony, and the Franck method of developing a musical theme are all here, so that to any reader who does not know Franck (and there must be country readers to whom the Gramophone has given the first chance of knowing him) this Record is a valuable possession.

This is a rather puzzling piece to describe. I take it that one of the first requirements from the writer of anything of the nature of an annotated programme is that he shall write so intelligibly that a listener to whom the piece described is quite unknown shall be able to grasp, at a first hearing, its principal features. Usually it should be pretty easy to achieve this result, but this piece, though the

amount of material out of which it is constructed is not very great and the use of it is pretty clear when one has looked through the score a time or two, is yet so put together as to make a synopsis difficult.

In my difficulty I turn up on my file two or three attempts of annotated programme writers of London fame. One of these, by dint of its music-type examples, could, I think, perhaps, be followed by an intelligent listener; the others, having no such examples, could not, I believe, be so followed.

It seems to me that both these analyses err by suggesting a simplicity of construction that does not exist. They both define the piece as an Air followed by a series of five Variations (a definition which my file shows me that I have, myself, as a programme annotator, on one occasion adopted). This sounds very clear and easy to follow; I doubt, however, whether, in practice the listener has the sense of a six-section piece—and, after all, the ear is the judge.

The best description of the piece seems to me to be as follows: Franck announces, at the outset (in his first seven pages) certain well-contrasted musical material, in the shape of three main themes opening thus:

Poco allegro.
ff Strings.

Più lento, ad lib.
Piano. *mf espress.* *dim.*

Strings. *pizz.*
mf

He then (in his remaining eighty pages) rings the changes upon these, repeating them in various forms, developing them and sometimes combining them.

The general style is that of a Concerto in which the solo instrument has a considerable predominance. Sometimes it carries one of these themes ; at other times some other instrument or instruments carry the theme and the solo instrument festoons decorative passages around it. Once or twice the solo instrument has a lower function, for once or twice we hear passages of mere brilliant pianism with no great artistic purpose behind them, however exhilarating they may be.

The transformations to which the three themes are subjected are sometimes surprising. To give an example, the second theme, above, is introspective and pathetic. Hear it, however, eighty pages later, as the piece is ending : it has now become the expression of a triumphant exultation.

I suggest that before the reader goes further he should try the first three-eighths-of-an-inch of Side 1 of the Records, and the last three-eighths-of-an-inch of Side 4. He will experience a flood of light as to Franck's methods—and as to two of his most characteristic moods, the mystical and the triumphant.

It really seems to me unnecessary to add anything further to this brief account of the music. Let the reader first play the Records straight through, to get the general spirit of the music, then study them carefully, one by one, noting with exactness the composer's treatment of the three themes mentioned, and, lastly, sit down to enjoy.

There is, by the way, no particular subtlety in Franck's orchestration in this piece. It is even particularly simple. The force employed consists of 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns, 2 Trumpets, Kettledrums and the usual Strings.

A few particulars personal to the composer may be added. I quote from his pupil, Vincent d'Indy¹:

'After the ill-fated private performance of *The Beatitudes*, the Minister of Fine Arts, overcome, perhaps, by remorse, attempted to get Franck appointed to one of the classes for composition at the Conservatoire, vacant on the retirement of Victor Massé; but Ernest Guiraud, composer of *Madame Turlupin*, was preferred to the creator of *The Beatitudes*.

'In consequence of this, a signal mark of favour was bestowed upon the composer by the Government, by way of compensation; in company with "the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker," and all manner of "purveyors," he was raised to the high dignity of *officer of the Academy*! Most artists were profoundly astonished to see the purple ribbon accorded to one who seemed worthy of the red; the only person to whom this refusal of justice seemed quite natural was the master himself.

'We, his pupils, were indignant, and did not hesitate to show it. One of us went so far as to express this feeling in Franck's presence; but the composer only replied in low, confidential tones: "Be calm, be calm—they have given me every hope for next year." It was not, however, until five or six years later that Franck received the ribbon of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, several musicasters, loafers in the Ministerial ante-rooms, having, of course, received precedence of him. But it would be wrong to suppose that this honour was bestowed upon the musician, the creator of the fine works which do honour to French art. Not in the least! It was to the official who had completed over ten years' service that the cross was presented, and the decree of August 4th, 1885, only says: "Franck (César Auguste), professor of organ." Decidedly the French Government was not happy in its dealings with him!

'It was in consequence of this nomination, and to show that he was something better than a *professor of organ*, that his friends and pupils raised a subscription to cover the expenses of a concert devoted entirely to his compositions.

'The "Franck Festival" took place on January 30, 1887, at the Cirque d'Hiver, under the baton of J. Pasdeloup and the composer himself. The programme was as follows:

FIRST PART.

(Conducted by JULES PASDELOUP.)

1. *Le Chasseur Maudit*, symphonic poem.
2. *Variations Symphoniques*, for piano and orchestra. M. Louis Dièmer.
3. Second part of *Ruth*, a Biblical eclogue. Mlle. Gavioli, M. Auguez, and Chorus.

¹ Reprinted, by permission, from Vincent d'Indy's *César Franck*. English translation by Rosa Newmarch. John Lane, 1910, 7s. 6d.

SECOND PART.

(Conducted by the Composer.)

4. *March and Air de Ballet*, with chorus, from the unpublished opera *Hulda*.
5. *Third and Eighth Beatitudes*. Mmes. Leslino, Gavioli, Balleroy.
MM. Auguez, Dugas, G. Beyle.

'The performance by an orchestra lacking in cohesion and insufficiently rehearsed was a deplorable affair. Padeloup, courageous innovator and first champion of symphonic music in France, was then growing old and losing authority as a conductor; he went entirely wrong in the *tempo* of the finale of the *Variations Symphoniques*, which ended in a breakdown. As to Franck, he was listening too intently to the vibration of his own thoughts to pay any attention to the thousand details for which a conductor must always be on the alert. The interpretation of *The Beatitudes* suffered in consequence, but such was his good-nature that he was the only person who did not regret the wretched performance, and when we poured out to him our bitter complaint that his works should have been so badly given, he answered, smiling and shaking back his thick mane of hair: "No, no; you are really too exacting, dear boys; for my own part, I was quite satisfied!"'

An English pupil of Franck, the late Dr. J. W. Hinton, whom some years ago I persuaded to write his recollections of the Master,¹ has also recorded the incident:

'In 1887 (at which time I resided in Guernsey), I journeyed to Paris to be present at the Franck Festival, portions of *Les Béatitudes* and various other pieces from his pen being performed at the Cirque d'Hiver, under the conductorship of Padeloup. Here, again, ill-fortune ensued. The music had been insufficiently rehearsed and was badly rendered. Padeloup (then almost in his dotage) started the *Variations Symphoniques* at double the pace intended, resulting in a "scramble," a hideous and painful travesty of the music.'

The performance described, and Franck's remark, are typical of the misfortunes of his life and of his attitude towards them.

The position of the *Symphonic Variations* in relation to

¹ In *The Music Student*, later republished as a pamphlet, *César Franck; Some Personal Reminiscences*. William Reeves. 9d.

some of Franck's other major works may be of interest to some readers :

<i>Redemption</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1871-4
<i>Quintet</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1879
<i>The Beatitudes</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1879
<i>The Accursed Hunter</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1882
<i>Prelude, Choral and Fugue for Piano</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1884
<i>SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1885
<i>Sonata for Piano and Violin</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1886
<i>Prelude, Aria and Finale for Piano</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1886
<i>Symphony</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1886-?
<i>Quartet</i>	.	.	.	.	.	1889

Two Large H.M.V. Black Records. D. 697-8, each 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Full Score, published by Lafleur, at 7s. 6d.

An arrangement for two pianos (two players) is published by Enoch, at 6s.

RECORD No. 28

Symphonic Prelude . *The Afternoon of a Faun* . . . Debussy

THE AEOLIAN ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Cuthbert Whitmore)

This is the most popular of all Debussy's orchestral pieces, and, beautiful as it is, it is a pity that it occupies the concert-platform so frequently as to leave small opportunity for performances of his later orchestral works, with which the larger public would probably be just as much charmed did it know them.

Here, by the way, is a chance for our Gramophone companies. Three of them having given us Records of *The Afternoon of a Faun*, why should not one of them give us *Pictures (Images)*, another the *Three Nocturnes*, and still another *The Sea*. Here are three sets of three pieces each, one set for each of the companies alluded to.

In the nineties, when this work was new to London, it was once performed at the Queen's Hall under the title 'The Afternoon of a Young Gazelle', and elder concert-goers still smile as they recall this 'howler'. It is not a 'fawn', but a 'faun' that is in question, a sort of minor God Pan, a rural half-deity, the upper part that of a man, with horns, and the lower part that of a goat, with hoofs and tail.

In this piece Debussy is translating into music a poem of Mallarmé, to translate which into English would be beyond me, or I would do it here. As a matter of fact, I believe that no attempt at an English translation of this poem has ever been published, and for very good reasons; at all events no poetic translation has, I think, appeared, though years ago Sir Edmund Gosse published an explanation of the author's aims and a synopsis of his thought, as follows:

'To say that I understand it, bit by bit, phrase by phrase, would be excessive. But, if I am asked whether this famous miracle of unintelligibility gives me pleasure, I answer, cordially—Yes. I even fancy that I obtain from it as definite and solid an impression as M. Mallarmé desires to produce. This is what I read in it: A faun—a simple, sensuous

passionate being—wakens in the forest at daybreak and tries to recall his experience of the previous afternoon. Was he the fortunate recipient of an actual visit from nymphs, white and golden goddesses, divinely tender and indulgent? Or is the memory he seems to retain nothing but the shadow of a vision, no more substantial than the "arid rain" of notes from his own flute? He cannot tell. Yet, surely, there was, surely there is, an animal whiteness among the brown reeds of the lake that shines out yonder. Were they, are they, swans? No! But Naiads plunging? Perhaps! Vaguer and vaguer grows the impression of this delicious experience. He would resign his woodland godship to retain it. A garden of lilies, golden-headed, white-stalked, behind the trellis of red roses? Ah! the effort is too great for his poor brain. Perhaps if he selects one lily from the garth of lilies, one benign and beneficent yielder of her cup to thirsty lips, the memory, the ever-receding memory, may be forced back. So, when he has glutted upon a bunch of grapes, he is wont to toss the empty skins in the air and blow them out in a visionary greediness. But no, the delicious hour grows vaguer; experience or dream, he will never know which it was. The sun is warm, the grasses yielding; and he curls himself up again, after worshipping the efficacious star of wine, that he may pursue the dubious ecstasy into the more hopeful boskages of sleep.

'This, then, is what I read in the so excessively obscure and unintelligible *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*; and, accompanied as it is with a perfect suavity of language and melody of rhythm, I know not what more a poem of eight pages could be expected to give. It supplies a simple and direct impression of physical beauty, of harmony, of colour; it is exceedingly mellifluous, when once the ear understands that the poet, instead of being the slave of the Alexandrine, weaves his variations round it, like a musical composer.'

Perhaps some readers who do not possess Mallarmé's slender volume of *Poésies* (Editions de la *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Paris, 1921; fr. 7.50) may, after reading this, be curious to have an example of its manner; I pick one of the simpler passages:

'Réfléchissons . . .
 ou si les femmes dont tu gloses
 Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux!
 Faune, l'illusion s'échappe des yeux bleus
 Et froids, comme une source en pleurs, de la plus chaste:
 Mais, l'autre tout soupirs, dis-tu qu'elle contraste
 Comme brise du jour chaude dans ta toison!
 Que non! par l'immobile et lasse pâmoison

Suffoquant de chaleurs le matin frais s'il lutte,
 Ne murmure point d'eau que ne verse ma flûte
 Au bosquet arrosé d'accords ; et le seul vent
 Hors des deux tuyaux prompt à s'exhaler avant
 Qu'il disperse le son dans une pluie aride,
 C'est, a l'horizon pas remué d'une ride,
 Le visible et serein souffle artificiel
 De l'inspiration, qui regagne le ciel.'

Mr. Gosse's comment upon the language of the poem is this: the poet, he says, has attempted 'to use words in such harmonious combinations as will suggest to the reader a mood or a condition in the poet's mind at the moment of composition', and this explanation was accepted by the poet who paraphrased and perhaps slightly extended the comment in this way: The putting together of the words, however beautifully this might be done, was, he said, merely the equivalent of the pressing of the keys of an instrument ; the music was what resulted from this.

Gosse's *Questions at Issue* (1893) and Arthur Symon's *The Symbolist Movement* might be consulted by any who wish to enquire further into the aims of the poet and the nature of the poem that have inspired Debussy.

Mallarmé's conception has stimulated artists in more than one branch. Manet has illustrated it (the original edition of the poem appeared with his illustrations); Debussy has given it a musical interpretation ; Nijinsky and Massine have mimed it.

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

I come at last to the music. Naturally it is vague and hazy. So it is at any rate in its intellectual and emotional suggestions—achieving in this way and others the miracle of supplying a counterpart to the poet's half-hinted thoughts and half-expressed emotions. Despite this, when the score is looked into it is found to offer a series of perfectly clean melodic outlines, the vague effect resulting not from any lack of clarity in texture, but from the use of melodic chromaticism, subtlety of harmony and delicacy of orchestration.

The Orchestra employed excludes the louder instruments. There are no Trumpets and no Trombones, the only Brass instruments being the Horns ; and there are no Kettledrums, the only percussion instruments being 'Cymbales Antiques' sounding definite notes, a fifth apart, and they are ordered to be used so rarely and so very gently that for my part I can in this Record only detect one note from them and that at the very end. Sweeps of Harp tone are an important element in the orchestral effect, and so are languid arabesques by the various Wind instruments, faint String Tremolos sometimes with mutes, sometimes without, and many of them to be played *sur la touche* (or to put it into the usual Italian, *sul tasto*, *i.e.*, with the bow drawn across the strings away from the bridge and towards the fingerboard, producing a light, feathery quality of tone).

Only two climaxes occur in the course of the piece, and they are very moderate in power.

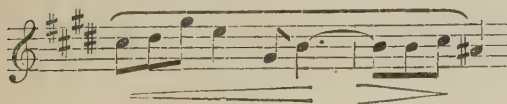
The more definitely shaped musical material of the piece consists of a number of mere wisps of tune, such as the following (the instruments mentioned are those which first introduce the themes)—

For FLUTE :

Très modéré.



p doux et espressif.



For HORNS :



For OBOE :



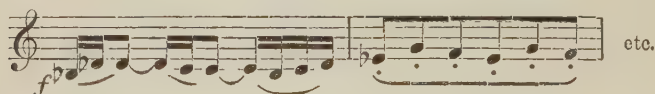
For FLUTES :



For OBOE :



For HORNS :



For FLUTE :



Successively (all in the same bar) for Flutes, Oboes and Cor Anglais, Clarinets and Bassoon, Horns :



The subtlety with which this material is woven into the web and the delicacy with which it is coloured are very admirable. Of this piece it may be said that it is all detail, not implying by this that there is any lack of general effect or of continuity, but that every note in the score 'counts'.

Some listeners may be satisfied to dream their way through the 'Afternoon' with the Faun himself; others will wish to lose none of the musical detail, and, that grasped, to begin their dreaming. To these latter the simultaneous hearing of the Record and seeing the score may be recommended; they will probably be surprised to find how much they have been previously accustomed to miss, and delighted to have beauties brought to their notice of whose existence they were formerly ignorant.

Large Aeolian Vocalion Blue Record. D. 02126. 4s. 6d.

Printed Music. Miniature Orchestral Score, published by Jobert, Paris, and stocked by all the London firms that supply miniature scores. Piano solo and duet arrangements are also to be had (same publisher), as also an arrangement for two players at two pianos.

RECORDS Nos. 29 and 30

Orchestral Suite . . . *Mother Goose* Ravel

Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty

Hop o' My Thumb

Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas

Conversation between Beauty and the Beast

The Fairy Garden

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Albert Coates)

or

AEOLIAN ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Cuthbert Whitmore)

The *Mother Goose Suite* (*Ma Mère l'Oye*) is a series of musical illustrations to five fairy tales.

All are vividly pictured by means of a moderate-sized orchestra consisting of 2 Flutes and Piccolo, 2 Oboes and Cor Anglais, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons and Double-bassoon, 2 Horns ; 2 Kettledrums, Big Drum, Tam-Tam, Cymbals and Triangle ; Xylophone, Glockenspiel and Celesta ; Harp ; Strings. (It will be noted that there are no Trumpets or Trombones.)

I. *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty.*

A Pavane is a slow dance ; its solemnity and quietness of style make it a suitable form for Ravel's use in the suggestion of sleep.

This is a very short piece. Note the lovely bits of tune given from time to time to FLUTES and HORN and CLARINET.

Generally there are two of these bits of tune going on together.

To me this piece, however beautifully played, is just a little dull, but others may not feel as I do about it.

(In the Aeolian Vocalion reproduction of this piece the last twelve bars are repeated, in order, I suppose, to fill

out the side of the Record. It is a legitimate device, as no loss of effect results.)

2. *Hop o' My Thumb.*

At the head of the score is this quotation from Perrault's *Fairy Tales* :

'He thought he could easily find his way by means of the crumbs that he had scattered as he had passed along. But he had a rude surprise, for he couldn't find one single crumb. The birds had come and eaten them all up!'

Here various STRINGED INSTRUMENTS WITH THEIR MUTES ON play, as softly as possible, an accompaniment in a curious shifting rhythm (*e.g.*, 1st bar, 2 beats; 2nd bar, 3 beats; 3rd bar, 4 beats; 4th bar, 5 beats; 6th bar, 3 beats; 7th bar, 2 beats). Does this represent the irregular, winding road?

Over this gently moves a tune, at first for OBOE, then for COR ANGLAIS, then momentarily for CLARINET and then, equally momentarily, for FLUTE and so on. Does this represent the little wanderer of the piece?

In the middle the birds begin to sing (Flutes and Violins, the latter not easily to be detected in the H.M.V. Record), whilst the tune is carried on by the BASSOON

By and by, the PICCOLO takes over the tune, also a SOLO 'CELLO two octaves beneath

At the end the Strings have the same shifting rhythms as at the beginning. The OBOE enters, with a four-note fragment of the tune, as the piece closes

3. *Laideronette—Empress of the Pagodas.*

Here the score is headed by this quotation from *Le Serpentin Vert*, by Mme. d'Aulnoy :

'She took off her clothes and stepped into the bath. Immediately the Pagodas¹ and Pagodinas began to sing and play their instruments. Some had Lutes made of nutshells, others Viols made of almond shells.

¹ I don't think this means those Chinese Towers of which something resembling one has, curiously, found a site in Kew Gardens, but the little figures of Chinese men and Chinese women, with loosely nodding heads, to be bought sometimes in curiosity shops—'Petites figures chinoises, en porcelaine, à têtes mobiles', as Larousse's Dictionary defines them.

For, of course, the size of the instruments had to be proportioned to the size of the performers.'

So now we have Ravel's imagination at work on a Chinese scene, and a capital job he has made of it. The piece is marked 'In a March-like tempo'. The orchestration is very varied. At the opening notice the MUTED STRINGS, in a shimmering *tremolo*, with HARP notes here and there, and a little two-note tune given to plucked 'CELLO with BASSOON and HORN answering one another.

Soon, above all this, creeps in a PICCOLO SOLO, which goes on for some time.

After a time GLOCKENSPIEL (loud) and CELESTA (soft) enter, taking alternate bars, and with them are heard other instruments.

Then comes a short OBOE SOLO (not very well heard in A.V. Record), another FLUTE SOLO and so on, until we arrive at the moment for the XYLOPHONE to enter (hammered strips of wood, not very prominent in the H.M.V. Record) Flutes and plucked Strings with it.

A long-drawn Chinese-sounding melody, for HORN with other instruments, is turned over soon to CLARINET (in its low cadaverous register), and quickly becomes a duet for the CELESTA joins it, in Canon.

A melancholy FLUTE SOLO follows, and so on to the end.

Look out for a place where the CELESTA plays very, very softly, as a solo, the tune given to the Piccolo near the opening. (In the H.M.V. Record, Mr. Coates seems curiously to have introduced the Piccolo here also.) Note the occasional quiet strokes on the Tam-Tam, and once or twice loud strokes upon it.

4. *Conversation between Beauty and the Beast.* (This piece is omitted from the Vocalion Records.)

Here we are given a quotation from still another famous French teller of Fairy Tales, Mme. Leprince de Beaumont

'When I think about your kind heart, you don't look so ugly.'

'Oh yes, I *have* a kind heart, but I'm a monster all the same.'

'Plenty of men are worse monsters than you!'

'If only I were clever I'd pay you a splendid compliment, to express my thanks for your kind opinion; but, alas, I'm only a Beast.'

'Beauty, will you be my wife?'

'No, Beast.'

'I die happy, since I have the joy of seeing you once more.'

'No, my dear Beast, you won't die, you'll live to become my husband.'

But the Beast had disappeared! And she saw before her a handsome Prince, who thanked her for having broken his spell.

This piece is marked 'In medium Valse time'.

Beauty speaks through gentle CLARINET, FLUTE and OBOE, Beast through gruff DOUBLE-BASSOON. A HARP *trillando* (followed by Violin harmonics) marks the happy transformation of Beast into Prince.

5. *The Fairy Garden.*

Here Prince Charming finds the Sleeping Beauty. As he kisses her, the Princess opens her eyes (SOLO VIOLIN and CELESTA have a beautiful tune here, with Harp chords as a part of their accompaniment).

Then the Courtiers enter, wedding bells are heard merrily ringing, and the 'ever after' begins as auspiciously as any Orchestra can possibly suggest.

The H.M.V. Record of this Suite is the better. The Aeolian does not give a bad reproduction, but it is not first rate, the tone being rather coarse, and the style not sufficiently refined. Taking it for all in all, the playing reproduced in this pair of Records is not so good as that (by the same Orchestra, under the same Conductor) in Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*. Like that piece, this one is scored for a small orchestra (no Trumpets or Trombones).

The *Empress of the Pagodas* and *Fairy Gardens* sections have been recorded (on back and front of one Columbia disc) by Hamilton Harty and the Hallé Orchestra, but the Record is not a good one.

It may be of interest to note that *Mother Goose* was first written as a Piano Duet—a fact which anybody

hearing it first in its orchestral form finds it difficult to credit.

Two Large Double-sided H.M.V. Black Records. D. 708, 709, 6s. 6d. each.

Or **Two Large Double-sided V. Records.** D. 02121; D. 02123, 4s. 6d. each. (As already mentioned, these omit *Beauty and the Beast*.)

Printed Music. Miniature Score (about 10 francs). Piano Duet (about 10 francs). All published by Durand, 4, Place de la Madeleine, Paris; stocked by the usual London houses, and obtainable through any good music seller.

RECORDS Nos. 31, 32, 33 and 34

Orchestral Variations . . . *Enigma* Elgar

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Sir Edward Elgar, O.M.)

Of all Elgar's larger works this is the most widely known. All Orchestras, in, perhaps, every country, play it. It was first given in 1899 (under Richter's conductorship, at the St James' Hall) and it had an immediate effect in firmly establishing its composer's reputation.

'For my part, I expected nothing from any English composer; and when the excitement about *Gerontius* began, I said wearily: "Another Wardour Street festival oratorio!" But when I heard the Variations (which had not attracted me to the concert) I sat up and said "Whew!" I knew we had got it at last.'—BERNARD SHAW.¹

The plan of the work is as follows:

A Tune, called *Enigma*,

Nine Variations upon it.

An Intermezzo.

Three more Variations.

A Finale.

The reason the Tune is called '*Enigma*' is curious. It seems that it is so written that another Tune, this one well known to us all, could be played with it, and even, it is said (though this seems incredible), with each of the Variations. What this other tune is, nobody has ever found out, and the composer has already kept his secret for a quarter of a century.

Another interesting thing is the general dedication of the piece, '*To my friends pictured within*'.

Each of the Variations is preceded by the initials or the nicknames of the friend pictured in it. Elgar himself has said of this:

'It is true that I have sketched, for their amusement and mine, the idiosyncrasies of fourteen of my friends, not necessarily musicians; but this is a personal matter, and need not have been mentioned publicly; the Variations should stand simply as a "piece" of music.'

¹ Article on *Sir Edward Elgar: Music and Letters*. Jan., 1920.

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In the following description by no means every feature of interest is pointed out, but it is thought that as much is given as the ordinary listener will care to look for as the performance proceeds, and further study may be pursued by means of observant listening with the miniature score.

The TUNE (*Andante* = Gently moving, 4/4). Note this carefully, in all its details, as it is played, and become thoroughly familiar with it by several repetitions before proceeding farther, for it offers the clue to all that follows.

Andante.
p espress. e sostenuto.
ten.
pp
cres.
dim.
cres.
mf
dim. molto.
sempre p
mesto.
p rit.

It falls into three sentences, as it were—six bars in the minor (STRINGS alone), four bars in the major (STRINGS and WOOD), and the first six bars repeated much as before, but ending with a major chord.

After pausing a moment on this chord we pass into a whispered (or what should be a whispered) passage that leads into—

Variation I. (*L'istesso tempo* = At the same speed, 4/4.)

Dedicated to C.A.E., *i.e.*, C. Alice Elgar, the composer's wife. The Tune is played very softly by FLUTE and CLARINET (doubled by Violin and Viola, tremolo). Behind this can be heard a quietly moving accompaniment. (Unfortunately the effect in this Record is somewhat confused, and tune and accompaniment are not so clearly distinguishable as they should be.)

Hear at the end of the Section the BRASS give out the Tune. The end is (or should be) very delicate, the CLARINET very softly playing the opening notes of the Tune (put into the major), whilst the Strings and a Horn accompany.

Variation II. (*Allegro* = Quick, 3/8.)

Dedicated to H.D.S-P. This is a dainty, light-fingered little three-in-a-bar Movement. A rapid run-about theme is treated sometimes in the VIOLINS, sometimes in WOOD WIND. A slow triple-time version of the original Tune, after a time, appears underneath this in 'CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES.

Variation III. (*Allegretto* = Pretty quickly, 3/8.)

Dedicated to R.B.T. A very happy treatment of the Tune (again three-in-a-bar), mostly by the WOOD WIND; at the opening one OBOE has it, accompanied by the rest of the Wood Wind, the Strings adding *pizzicato* 'pings' (*i.e.*, notes plucked, instead of bowed). A gruff BASSOON solo (doubled by 'Cello) is at one point a prominent feature.

Variation IV. (*Allegro di molto* = At a good quick speed, 3/4.)

Dedicated to W.M.B. This gives the Tune much in its old original form (but still changed from four-in-a-bar to three-in-a-bar), with a good deal of added force. At the end the FULL ORCHESTRA is playing—with stirring effect.

(The Kettledrums come out here rather unusually clearly—for a Gramophone Record.)

Variation V. (*Moderato* = At a moderate speed, 12/8.)

Dedicated to R.P.A. (*i.e.*, R. P. Arnold, son of Matthew Arnold). This is a rather solemn variation.

At the opening the Tune is heard in the bass, from 'CELLOS, DOUBLE BASSES and BASSOONS, the VIOLINS (on their low G string) working against this a very serious-minded but beautiful new Tune.

After a few bars of charming Wood Wind, these two Tunes again enter, but this time 'inverted', the original Tune being now above (in Wood and Horns—not so easily heard as it should be), and the new Tune below (in all the Strings).

There is more use of this same material and then this Variation passes without break into—

Variation VI. (*Andantino* = Gently moving along, 3/2.)

Dedicated to Ysobel (said to be the composer's daughter). At the opening, bits of the Tune are heard in the LOWER STRINGS (antiphonally, Viola and 'Cello), but with the intervals widened (it is said that Ysobel is tall and has a bold stride). The BASSOON and some of its Wood Wind colleagues interject fragmentary thoughts.

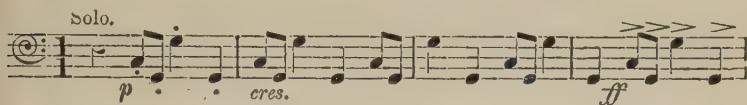
After a few bars a VIOLA SOLO is a prominent feature. The last three notes are for Viola Solo with a single Horn note as accompaniment.

This is throughout very much of a Viola Variation. (Unfortunately the solo and orchestral playing is not always dead in tune, and the tone is not so delicately beautiful as Ysobel and her friends would surely wish.)

Variation VII. (*Presto* = Rapid.)

Dedicated to 'Troyte' (said to be A. T. Griffith, an architect of Malvern). The KETTLEDRUMS are the heroes of this mad, slap-bang Variation, playing very vigorously

a little figure founded on the opening of the Tune, so arranged that the accent falls now on one note, now on another—a good recipe for producing the feeling of restlessness that is sought here.



A feature of this Variation is a short ascending phrase that begins very softly, works up to a great loudness and then begins again softly; in the middle a version of this phrase is heard thundered out by TROMBONES.

A later feature is the brilliant express-speed triplet scale-passage work of the Strings, and especially of the Violins.

This Variation bears the unusual time-signature of '1', i.e., one beat in the bar, of the value of a semibreve.

Near the end the BRASS have a few bars alone.

Variation VIII. (*Allegretto* = At a gentle, rather quick pace, 6/8.)

Dedicated to W.N. A very graceful variation, probably the portrait of a lady (said to be Miss Winifred Norbury, of Malvern).

Note the two CLARINETS (running parallel, six notes apart) at the opening, joined a bar later by two FLUTES. A piquant little *motif* of ascending notes trilled by OBOE is heard a little later.

Variation IX. (*Adagio* = Slowly, 3/4.)

Dedicated to Nimrod. 'Nimrod' suggests something active; this, however, is a delicately poetic Variation, the name being merely a fanciful translation of that of the late Mr. A. E. Jaeger, of Messrs. Novello, a gentle person and an enthusiastic Elgarian.¹

¹ Hearing the *Enigma Variations* once in Rome, I found in the programme a statement that this one was dedicated 'to the celebrated English organist, Nimrod'.

This Variation begins very softly and solemnly in the STRINGS alone. It is throughout very dignified, yet full of feeling.

Unfortunately it is not played with quite all the delicacy the music demands, and the one 'cut' of the whole set of Records occurs here, robbing us of a noble passage of 12 bars Full Orchestra, and very much spoiling the effect of the Variation.

As the Variation closes we feel that the first portion of the work is at an end.

After a moment's pause we make a fresh start with—

Variation X. Intermezzo. (*Allegretto* = At a gentle, rather quick pace, 3/4.)

Dedicated to 'Dorabella' (said to be Miss Penny, of Malvern). This can barely be called a 'Variation', as it makes little reference to the Tune. It is fairy-like in its delicacy.

Muted STRINGS and WOOD WIND give out little chirps and twitters, and then there creeps in a soft VIOLA SOLO.

Keen listeners may care to look out for a passage where the Flutes are heard in their low rich register, in which their tone colour is very distinct from that of their upper notes.

This Intermezzo is of fair length, and is indeed quite a piece in itself.

Variation XI. (*Allegro di molto* = At a good rapid pace, 2/2.)

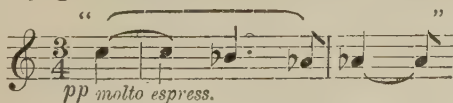
Dedicated to G.R.S., *i.e.*, the late Dr. Sinclair, of Hereford Cathedral. Note how his active organ pedalling is suggested almost throughout in passages given to 'CELLOS, DOUBLE BASSES and BASSOONS; these passages will be found upon observation to be derived from the opening of the original theme.

G.R.S. was a fine musician, full of energy and enterprise, and his character is suggested in this Variation.

Dedicated to B.G.N.

Dedicated to *** (said to be Lady Mary Lygon.)

It is a quotation from Mendelssohn's *A Calm Sea and a Prosperous Voyage Overture*.



Dedicated to E.D.U.

In the middle is what we may call a 'Beethoven touch'—a sudden break after a loud passage, and a resumption with a throbbing rhythm upon the lower Strings, over which soon creeps in a Wood Wind tune in different rhythm from what has gone before, against which are heard some

very soft percussion effects. It is all very unexpected, and very direct in its manner.

(From figure 68, in the score, to figure 70, a passage of nineteen bars, is in this Record repeated.)

The following comment upon national feeling as exemplified in these Variations may be of interest :

' The presence of characteristically English qualities in Elgar's music has been challenged by critics from abroad, and more recently in one of our own musical strongholds, and the challenge has been consistently taken up by Elgar's staunchest champion. But the dispute arises chiefly through a misconception. Although there exists undoubtedly an idiom in music which, whether by association or otherwise, conveys the immediate impression of an English origin—an idiom which Elgar has seldom if ever used—it is not by idiom alone that national characteristics are conveyed. These Variations, dedicated "To my friends pictured within," are portraits limned in a musical medium of which the theme is the simplest expression. The medium itself is neither German nor English. It is merely European. But the type of friendship underlying these portraits is much more characteristic. More than once Continental authors have endeavoured to discover and record the secret of our friendships, in which so much is taken for granted that their expression can be quite safely reduced to cabalistic terms, or seasoned with a pinch of raillery. The Englishman has been told that he is inarticulate, when it is nearer the truth to say that in certain relations he does not feel the need of words. And the Englishman's chaff would quickly undermine most friendships made on the Continent. One could not assert that Elgar has been inarticulate in these variations, nor could one regard them as banter. To him the mission of music is perhaps too serious to permit of it, though he has his full share of the national sense of fun. But the feeling that pervades this work is friendship of the kind that not only tolerates but thrives upon both inarticulateness and banter. That, although maybe not a national monopoly, is at least a pronounced characteristic, and Elgar, in the glow of uneffusive affection, has portrayed it with as much success as, no doubt, he has portrayed the friends concerned.

' The work belongs to the most interesting period of Elgar's career, after he had found himself and before official honours had found him. It may be that, since then, he has written works more instinct with that nobility which, where music is concerned, some critics prefer to mere humanity. But he has written nothing more human, nothing more full of vitality and of spirited independence since the Variations, and some works more or less contemporary with them.'—*Edwin Evans*.

A complete reproduction of this noble work is a valuable household possession. This is not a bad one ; but neither is it a really good one, and there are moments that make one wonder why the composer passed the Records as satisfactory. One hesitates to say that the conducting is at fault, for one has heard many performances directed by the composer (as this one is) which were very much better. There is a lack of delicacy in many places, and a lack of subtlety almost everywhere. Such music demands first-rate recording and is worth any amount of trouble to obtain it. The acute point of one's grievance is precisely this : that these are Records one cannot afford to be without.

On the back of the last of the four Records is *Fan Ballet, The Sanguine Fan*. This is a relic of a war-charity production at Chelsea in 1917 ; it is of no particular importance.

Four Large H.M.V. Black Records. D. 578, 582 ; 602, 596. *Fan Ballet* on D. 596, each 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. Novello, Full Score, 25s. ; Miniature Score, 7s. 6d. ; Piano Solo arrangement, 5s. 6d. ; Piano Duet, 9s.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since this book was set in type another recording of the *Enigma Variations* has appeared—that of Sir Henry Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra (Columbia, Four Large Blue Records, L 1629–32, each 7s. 6d., supplied in an Album, with annotations on each page—a practical system !). This is, for the most part, a brilliant recording (the speeds are generally a little quicker than those of the other set of Records). An occasional (and very surprising) fault is that of out-of-tune string playing—possibly due to some defect in reproduction.

RECORDS Nos. 35 and 36

English Rhapsody *Brigg Fair* } F. Delius
Tone Poem *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* }

THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Eugene Goossens)

F. Delius. *Brigg Fair*.

The title of this piece is somewhat misleading. It suggests to many people the music of noise and bustle, of 'galloping horses' and 'three shies a penny', whereas in reality it is a piece of very delicate texture. The title is, then, not intended to be descriptive.

As a matter of fact, the piece is of the nature of a set of Variations upon an Air, and it is this Air, that of a Lincolnshire folk-song, that gives the piece its name. The spirit of the music is not that of an English fair, but that of a piece of love-making which goes on, we may be sure, in some quiet corner and away from the sounds and scenes of merriment.

The words of the folk-song are as follows, and Delius has given them in full on the opening pages of his score :

It was on the fift' of August,
The weather fine and fair,
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair,
For Love I was inclined.

I rose up with the lark in the morning,
With my heart so full of glee,
Of thinking there to meet my dear,
Long time I wished to see.

I looked over my left shoulder,
To see whom I could see,
And there I spied my own true love,
Come tripping down to me.

I took hold of her lily-white hand,
And merrily was her heart,
And now we're met together,
I hope we ne'er shall part.

For its meeting is a pleasure,
 And parting is a grief,
 But an unconstant lover
 Is worse than a thief.

The green leaves they shall wither,
 And the branches they shall die,
 If ever I prove false to her,
 To the girl that loves me.

And this is the air to which they are traditionally sung, and which Delius has made the basis of his 'English Rhapsody':



The form of the piece is roughly this:

Introduction—Slow and very poetical.

First Section—The Tune six times played (apparently corresponding to the six stanzas of the poem); the repetitions of the Tune are unvaried, save as to harmony and orchestration.

Middle Section—Another Tune (possibly a remote derivative of the above Folk Tune), twice given, then briefly developed.

Final Section—About ten more repetitions of the Folk Tune, some of them this time with considerable variation.

It is as well to get a grasp of the form of this piece before listening to it. Nobody is going to enjoy the landscape less because he doesn't lose his way on his walk!

The Orchestra employed is large, consisting of:

- 3 FLUTES.
- 2 OBOES and COR ANGLAIS.
- 3 CLARINETS and BASS CLARINET.
- 3 BASSOONS and DOUBLE BASSOON.

6 HORNS.

3 TRUMPETS.

3 TROMBONES and TUBA.

HARP.

3 KETTLEDRUMS, BIG DRUM and TRIANGLE.

3 TUBULAR BELLS (the notes are B flat, C, D).

HARP, and STRINGS as usual.

Brigg Fair is a piece which is well worth close study, and, indeed, though it should make an impression upon even the casual listener, by him a good deal of beauty will pass unobserved. Three sides of the two Records are given to this piece, and, for the convenience of the student, I will base my description upon this arbitrary division.

First Side.

INTRODUCTION. FLUTES and HARP are the protagonists, with a very little help from the Clarinet and an occasional background of very soft chords for Muted Strings or for Horns.

The FLUTE has an arabesque-like figure :

Slow—Pastoral.



The HARP plays sweeping chords as an accompaniment to this, the harmonies thus suggested being delicate and subtle, and quite characteristic of the composer.

This is a very lovely passage. (The Flute arabesque reappears once or twice, in meditative comments, in the piece which follows.)

FIRST SECTION. We now come to the six repetitions of the Folk Tune. They are as follows :

(1) (*With easy movement, piano, dolce*¹). OBOE has the

¹ I quote these directions in mixed English and Italian, as they stand in the score.

tune, with accompaniment of Clarinets and Bassoons and some *pizzicato* chords in Strings (without Double Bass).

(2) (Still *piano, dolce*.) FLUTE has the Tune, with accompaniment for Strings (this time bowed, but still without Double Basses).

(3) FIRST VIOLINS have the Tune, with accompaniment solely for the other Strings (still without Double Basses).

(4) FLUTES and CLARINETS, an octave apart, have the Tune, with accompaniment solely of Strings (this time with Double Basses).

(5) A passage now intervenes which, whilst derived from the Tune, does not repeat it exactly, but rather develops it. It offers a considerable contrast to what has preceded, being loud and fully scored ; at the end it gradually diminishes in tone. A lightly-played tripping counterpoint of Violins in octaves is one of the features of this passage.

(6) TWO HORNS, in unison, have the Tune, being accompanied by thin-sounding chords in Upper Strings.

The tripping counterpoint of the previous passage continues, it having been taken over by Flute and Clarinet in octaves.

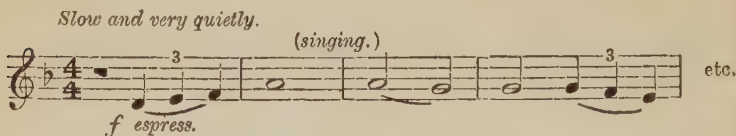
(7) TRUMPET (*mezzo-forte, dolce*) has the Tune. The tripping counterpoint is now given to Flutes, Oboes, Bassoons and Harp, and the Strings provide a flowing harmonic stream.

A few bars at the end (*becoming slower and slower*) thin down the tone, and the passage ends with a *pianissimo* String chord, with a Horn note, and six soft taps on the Kettledrum.

Second Side.

MIDDLE SECTION. This opens very quietly—soft held chords in MUTED STRINGS, an undulating figure in CLARINETS, and, above all this, an allusion to the FLUTE arabesque from the Introduction.

(1) A new Tune now enters in MUTED FIRST VIOLINS (*forte, espressivo*).



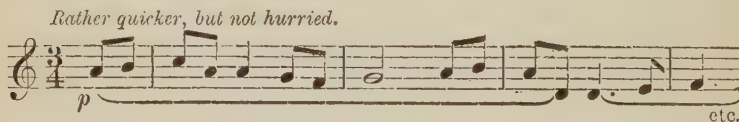
Whilst this is heard, the Muted String chords continue, with the undulating figure on Clarinets (to which Bass Clarinet is at length added), and occasional isolated notes on Horn, Kettledrum or Harp.

(2) The same passage is repeated with some changes of harmony, the Muted Violin Tune being lifted an octave higher, and the accompaniment being raised in pitch also.

(3) A few bars, first for HORNS and WOOD WIND alone and then for HORN and STRINGS alone, continue this passage, which at length (dying away) ends with Clarinet and Flute flutters, again with long held String chords.

FINAL SECTION.

(1) We now have a Variation for Wood Wind and Horns alone, the CLARINET sustaining the melody (a version of the Folk Tune) as follows :



(2) The same version of the Folk Tune (a little changed) is taken up by FLUTE and CLARINET, the Strings now joining in the accompaniment.

At the beginning and end of this Variation we hear a note or two of BELL chimes.

(3) The original version of the Folk Tune is given out in octaves by FLUTES, OBOES and CLARINETS, with a

String accompaniment, which includes a flowing counterpoint in VIOLINS, beginning as follows :

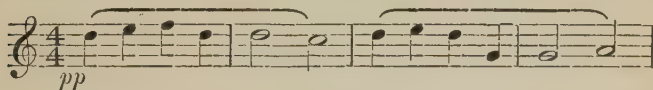


(4) A passage now intervenes which works up to a big climax by FULL ORCHESTRA. It is a development of the Violin counterpoint just quoted and the Folk Tune.

Having reached its height it declines, until at last we hear nothing but CLARINETS and BASSOON.

Third Side.

(5) TRUMPETS and TROMBONES give out (with solemnity) a very square-cut, four-in-a-bar version of the Folk Tune :



Against this are heard String chords (between the beats), with steady Bell notes chiming in the middle of every bar.

I regret to admit that the Trumpet and Trombone go somewhat flat towards the end of the tune. This ought not to be, and as this Third Side is almost throughout much inferior in delicacy to the First and Second Sides, I suggest that it should be re-recorded.

There is another reason why this re-recording should be undertaken. I quote from the composer's friend and biographer¹:

' On page 27 of the full score, where the time signature changes from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{4}{4}$, the average conductor takes the variation twice too fast, for which he may perhaps be excused since Delius intends the beat to be doubled—he has directed the passage to be played " slow, with solemnity "—and should have written $\frac{4}{2}$ for $\frac{4}{4}$. The right tempo is *quaver* = 80, *beating eight quavers to the bar*.'

I do not quite understand Mr. Heseltine's reference to

¹ Philip Heseltine, *Frederick Delius*. John Lane, 1923. 6s.

the time signature. Presumably he means not merely that the time signature is incorrect, but that what are now written as crotchets should have been written as minims, so suggesting to the eye a slower *tempo*. Anyhow, it seems clear that the intention of the above is that the passage as it now stands should go at the speed of 80 quavers to a minute, and as here recorded it goes at the speed of 160 quavers to the minute, so recalling the mis-reading of the Scherzo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which also is traditionally taken at twice its proper speed.

Against Mr. Heseltine's suggestion, however, is the fact that at half its present speed the passage in question would move very slowly indeed. I can, myself, hardly realise that it would be effective, but perhaps with very delicate playing there might be obtained that effect of mysticism which is probably what the composer wishes. At all events as the passage stands it appears to me to be dull and unconvincing, and I am willing to have Mr. Heseltine's directions tried. It is a thousand pities that the laws of nature preclude our slowing down our Gramophone turntables without at the same time lowering the pitch of the music.

(6) So much discussion of the last Variation may have conveyed the idea that it is a long one; as a matter of fact, it is only of eleven bars length. But it is followed by a similar Variation (to which the same considerations of speed presumably apply), in which the Full Orchestra is engaged, HORNS, CLARINETS, COR ANGLAIS and VIOLINS playing the melody, and the other instruments supplying the syncopated accompaniment.

(7) The last-named Variation is succeeded by a passage the fabric of which consists of TREMOLO STRING TONE (with some soft Kettledrum notes), into which fabric are embroidered by various Wood Wind instruments and Horns, references to preceding matter, including the FLUTE arabesque from the Introduction.

Unfortunately this passage has been very imperfectly played, or else has suffered in the recording, and even with the score before one it is almost impossible to discern in a performance the shapes and colours of some of the embroidery just mentioned.

It is to be assumed, by the way, that if Mr. Heseltine's demand as to speed were conceded it would affect this passage also, as from the moment where he interjected his remark until the present the music has gone on continuously in the same time. I can hardly imagine the present passage making its effect at half the present speed, but presumably it is the Composer's intention that this speed should be adopted, and I may be wrong.

(8) Triple time returns, and with it an extremely delicate Variation of the Folk Tune (*Gaily, più vivo*). A CLARINET carries the Tune, and Flute, Bassoon and Horns accompany, with Kettledrum and Triangle marking the rhythm.

(9) The Tune (in its original form) goes into the bass, 'CELLOS being entrusted with it. The other Strings accompany, and unfortunately the 'First Violins (Desk I.),' to whom a running semiquaver counterpoint is entrusted, cannot forget that they *are* 'First Violins (Desk I.)' and refuse subordination.

(10) An upward sweep of the Harpist's fingers leads in another repetition of the Folk Tune, in which OBOES, CLARINETS and some VIOLINS carry the melody. The remainder of the Orchestra (barring the louder Brass) accompany.

(11) Four bars for TRUMPETS, TROMBONES, TUBA, HORNS, CLARINETS and KETTLEDRUMS lead to a *fortissimo* repetition of the Folk Tune by Full Orchestra.

(12) Then for a few rapid bars we lose our heads in triplet exaltation (WOOD and STRINGS alternately giving the triplets, whilst BRASS, KETTLEDRUMS, BELLS and TRIANGLE stand by and applaud).

This is but an incident, however, and we are now thrown into the midst of a joyously riotous passage for FULL ORCHESTRA (*Rather slower, maestoso, very broadly*). The material is largely taken from the previous themes, and the delicate Flute arabesques from the opening bars are actually transposed to TROMBONES and TUBA, in octaves!

This passage is extremely effective, and is the culminating point of the Rhapsody.

(13) Then comes a quietening down until (*very quietly*) there enters the original Folk Tune, in OBOE, with accompaniment for Strings (and a little Horn tone and soft Kettledrum). Four or five bars (*rather slower and dying away to the end*), with a touch of Flute, close the Rhapsody.

(I regret to state that the Oboe passage mentioned is at its opening very unrhythmically played; there has assuredly been some misunderstanding between Oboist and Conductor as to one another's intentions, and as the passage in which their ideas diverge should be one of the most impressive in the whole piece, they have supplied still another weighty reason for the re-recording of this one side of the three, for which I have pleaded.)

ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING.

The charming little tone poems, *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and *Summer Night on the River*, were written in 1911-12, and are dedicated to the well-known composer, Balfour Gardiner. They are scored for a small orchestra: 2 Flutes, Oboe, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Horns and Strings.

On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring is based on two tunes. After a mere three bars of Introduction (which ought to be played *piano*), the *First Tune* (quite short) begins; it has a rocking motion, perhaps suggested by the rhythm of a Cuckoo's cry, and is given to STRINGS, with,

in one place, little wisps of melody in CLARINET and OBOE woven in.

A moment later the *Second Tune* starts. It is a Norwegian folk-song, *In Ola Valley* ; it runs on continuously from the previous tune, but its opening ought quite easily to be noticed from the fact that the FLUTE enters here for the first time in the piece (unfortunately, I cannot in this passage detect the Flute doubling the first phrase of the tune an octave higher, as it ought to do ; the entry of the OBOE, with the same phrase, a moment later cannot be missed).

There are several vague suggestions of the cuckoo call, as for instance by the two Clarinets, a little after the point just described. Soon, however, there comes an actual imitation of the call (plainly marked 'Cuckoo' in the score) ; it is allotted to the First Clarinet (as given in this performance it is very faint, and can barely be heard).

This continues for some time, and then the piece ends with a repetition of the First Tune, very softly played, and at last fading into the distance.

I would not call this a bad Record—nor a good one. The piece is one that should be played with the utmost delicacy and the most perfect balance, and here it is not so played. Like its companion, the last section of *Brigg Fair*, it should, then, be re-recorded. There are some short passages omitted, but they are not vital.

(The Norwegian folk-song, mentioned above, can be found in Grieg's *Nineteen Norwegian Folk Melodies arranged for Piano, Op. 66* ; Peters Edition.)

It may be of interest to some readers to see *Brigg Fair* and the *Cuckoo* placed chronologically in relation to some of its composer's other works :

<i>Paris, the Song of a Great City</i>	.	.	.	1899
<i>Appalachia</i> (final version)	.	.	.	1902
<i>Sea Drift</i>	.	.	.	1903
<i>A Mass of Life</i>	.	.	.	1904-5

<i>Piano Concerto</i> (final version)	. . .	1906
<i>BRIGG FAIR</i>	. . .	1907
<i>In a Summer Garden</i>	. . .	1908
<i>A Dance Rhapsody</i> (No. 1)	. . .	1908
<i>Fennimore and Gerda</i>	. . .	1908-10
<i>Summer Night on the River</i>	. . .	1911
<i>Life's Dance</i>	. . .	1911
<i>A Song of the High Hills</i>	. . .	1911-12
<i>ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO</i>		
<i>IN SPRING</i>	. . .	1912
<i>Requiem</i>	. . .	1914-16
<i>Concerto for Violin and 'Cello</i>	. . .	1915-16
<i>Violin Concerto</i>	. . .	1916
<i>A Dance Rhapsody</i> (No. 2)	. . .	1916
<i>String Quartet</i>	. . .	1916-17
<i>Incidental Music to 'Hassan'</i>	. . .	1920
<i>'Cello Concerto</i>	. . .	1921

Two Large H.M.V. Black Records. D. 799, 800, each 6s. 6d.

Printed Music. *Brigg Fair*. Curwen, Full Score, 45s., Miniature Score 5s. 6d., arrangement for Piano Duet, 3s. 9d. *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* (published together with *Summer Night on the River* by Tischer & Jagenberg, of Cologne, and similarly obtainable), Miniature Full Score, 7s. 6d., Piano arrangement, 4s.

RECORD No. 37

First Movement of *A London Symphony* . . . *R. Vaughan Williams*

THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(Conducted by Sir Dan Godfrey)

For a certain performance in 1920 the composer wrote a programme note, stating: 'The life of London (including possibly its various sights and sounds) has suggested to the composer an attempt at musical expression, but it would be no help to the hearer to describe these in words'.

Put in another way, Vaughan Williams has recorded in music his impressions and emotions, and these have 'possibly' (curious word) had their genesis in certain actual London experiences of which he prefers not to give us the details. He wants his piece, he says, to be 'self-impressive' and to 'stand or fall as "absolute" music'.

Therein probably he was wise. Had the symphony been floated off on the public mind rather as 'programme' than as 'music', many hearers might have been misguided enough to regard it as a puzzle-picture, as some people, with more justification, do a Strauss 'Poem', and have fixed their mind on discovering an explanation rather than on enjoying the musical beauty and receiving an emotional impression. Indeed, in America something of the sort has been done. Here is a suggested 'programme' recorded by the well-known critic, H. T. Finck, in the *New York Evening Post*.

'Mr. Williams presents the great metropolis musically in a great variety of aspects. At first old Father Thames flows calmly and we hear Big Ben (the Westminster chimes); then we enter the Strand's turmoil, and thence turn in the second movement to the gloom of Bloomsbury in the dusk. The Scherzo takes us to the Temple Embankment, between the Houses of Parliament and Waterloo Bridge, the slums, which on a Saturday night resemble a fair, where coster-girls dance their beloved "Double-Shuffle Jig." The final picture presents the London of the unemployed and the unfortunate, and finally we return to the silence of the river, interrupted by Big Ben.'

Mr. Finck seems to have confused the clock chimes at Westminster with the deep bell that strikes the hour, and to have moved our riverside slums to the wrong bank. Otherwise his programme seems to fit the musical facts pretty neatly, and so much suggestion as he gives can surely do none of us any harm, provided that we remember that, to quote Beethoven on his 'Pastoral Symphony', such a 'piece' is 'Mehr Empfindung als Malerei' (more expression of emotions than painting). These words are, indeed, a good deal truer of the *London* than of either the Beethoven *Pastoral* or the Vaughan Williams *Pastoral*.

The instruments used in the First Movement are as follows :

- 3 FLUTES and PICCOLO.
- 2 OBOES and COR ANGLAIS.
- 2 CLARINETS and BASS CLARINET.
- 2 BASSOONS and DOUBLE BASSOON.

- 4 HORNS.
- 2 TRUMPETS and 2 CORNETS.
- 3 TROMBONES and TUBA.

- 3 KETTLEDRUMS, SIDE DRUM, BASS DRUM,
CYMBALS, TRIANGLE and GLOCKENSPIEL.

HARP.

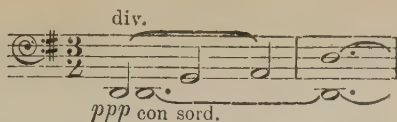
STRINGS.

The presence of both the noble Trumpets and their baser pier-band substitutes is to be observed ; it offers the opportunity for some very characteristic effects.

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

First Side.

It opens with a slow Introduction. The 'CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES (muted) begin :



This snatch of tune is to be remembered as the germ of a theme of considerable importance throughout the Movement.

As soon as it has been heard the VIOLAS and CLARINET (with Muted Horns and muted Violins holding a Chord) respond, with a little undulating *motif*.

(Note for score-readers: 15 bars are here omitted.)

Then the HORNS, BASSOONS, 'CELLOS and DOUBLE BASSES take up the opening phrase, extending it, so that it rises, not as before, one octave, but two. Against this the VIOLINS are heard playing an equally quiet descending theme.

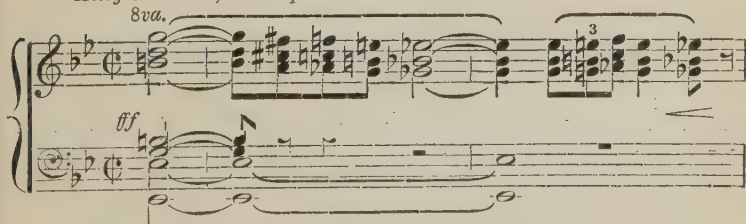
The passage continues, all very hushed, and into it now creeps the Westminster chime (HARP harmonics, doubled by a CLARINET).

A crescendo then begins, the WOOD WIND taking that tiny undulating of the opening, and doubling, trebling and quadrupling it in speed and in force, whilst, underneath, various BRASS instruments successively blare out the first *motif*—the rising theme of the very opening.

This culminates, there is a dead stop of a moment's duration, and then, the Introduction thus closed, almost FULL ORCHESTRA plunges us into the Movement proper.

It opens with a fiercer, descending chromatic theme,

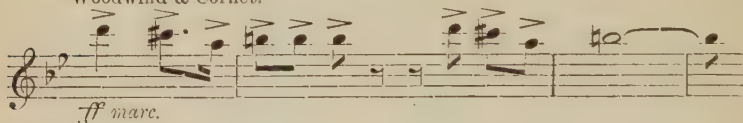
Allegro risoluto, molto pesante.



immediately repeated two octaves lower.

The Movement abounds in themes, almost always short ones. Others that appear almost at once are :

Woodwind & Cornet.



and :

Woodwind & Cornet.



(Note for score-readers : Immediately after this 19 bars are omitted.)

Flutes, Oboes & Violins.



Of this last a good deal of use is at once made, a flowing passage of some length, chiefly for Strings, Wood and Horns, being the result.

Soon a loud rising call of heavy chords by all Wind, alternated with a gay little *staccato* String tune, leads in this lively theme, in WOOD WIND, with Harp and Horn chords, accompanying (there ought to be also a Triangle, but I cannot hear it) :



This tune is at once repeated by CORNETS, CLARINET and *pizzicato* STRINGS. We are now fairly launched into

a vulgarly happy passage which occupies us to the turn of the Record. So far all that we have heard has constituted the 'Exposition' of the Movement. *i.e.*, the portion of it which makes known to us its musical subject matter.

Second Side.

What follows is technically of the nature of *Development* of the musical themes we have heard.

It opens very strenuously and even tragically, with a treatment of the opening theme of the Movement (*i.e.*, of the Movement proper).

This softens in feeling, and merges into a most lovely, flowing, gentle treatment of a sinuous tune which has flowered out of the seed of the opening rising *motif* of the Introduction.

In the middle of this occurs a beautiful interpolation—Two SOLO 'CELLOS (quite alone) have a rising passage which is then taken and carried still higher by Two SOLO VIOLINS, which as they reach the summit of these passages somehow touch the button which releases a flood of HARP tone. STRINGS then (two instruments only to each part and without Double Basses) play a slow chordal cadence, the HARPS are again released—and so forth.

A good deal of this section is omitted, and so is the opening of the Recapitulation section which follows. The very beautiful and stirring Coda which closes the Movement is, however, given almost in full.

In my present frame of mind I am inclined to suggest that there is not to be had from any one of the fifty records mentioned in this book a more genuinely poetical passage than that which opens about half an inch from the circumference of the Second Side of this Record, *i.e.*, the whole of the gentler portion of the 'Development' of the Movement. This is the expression of peace—and it is lovely stuff.

This Record is a most valuable possession, despite its cuts. These, however, are important, and for the benefit

of any reader who wishes to follow the music with the score, I give them here :

Page 1,	bar 3	to page 5	bar 4
„ 11	„ 2	„ 14	„ 5
„ 38	„ 6	„ 43	„ 1
„ 46	„ 2	„ 47	„ 5
„ 48	Bars 3 to 6		
„ 50	Bar 6 to page 56, bar 6		
„ 62	„ 4	„ 63	„ 1
„ 64	Bars 2 and 4 omitted		
„ 68	Bar 3 to page 70, bar 4.		

The Scherzo of the Symphony (good also, but inferior to the Movement just described) is also recorded, and I trust that the remaining two movements will soon be added, in which case a later edition of this book may give me an opportunity of describing this work as a whole.

Meantime I cannot pass from this subject without adverting to the extremely misleading labels, catalogue references, and references in another publication of the Recording Company. Both labels and catalogues speak of these Records as giving '*A London Symphony*', in four Parts, by which the unsuspecting are inevitably led to believe that by buying these Records they will have the work complete in its four Movements. A lengthy description of the Records in a publication of the Company affirms that 'this fine work, "*A London Symphony*" by R. Vaughan Williams, becomes available in Record form'. I have no doubt that it is by inadvertence that these misleading announcements have been made, and shall be delighted to find myself in a position to withdraw my strictures in any later edition of this book. I gladly note that the excellent *Musician and Music Lover's Guide to Columbia Records*, by Mr. R. Sterndale Bennett, correctly describes the Records as 'Two Movements of' the work. It would add greatly to the value of this useful compilation, and of

the similar compilations of other companies, if some indication were given in every case where a work listed is not complete. And, of course, the sooner the practice of issuing 'cut' versions is entirely dropped the better. Then we shall know where we are, which in buying Records at present, we certainly do not !

Large Columbia Light Blue Record. L. 1507. 7s. 6d.

Printed Music. Orchestral Score, published by Stainer & Bell, full-sized copy, 50s. ; ,miniature copy, 10s. 6d.

RECORDS Nos. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44

Orchestral Suite *The Planets* Holst

Mars (The Bringer of War)
 Venus (The Bringer of Peace)
 Mercury (The Winged Messenger)
 Jupiter (The Bringer of Jollity)
 Saturn (The Bringer of Old Age)
 Uranus (The Magician)
 Neptune (The Mystic)

'Song without Words' *Marching Song* Holst

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 (Conducted by the Composer)

The Planets consists of seven pieces, expressing a series of emotions in keeping with traditional astrological significances. There is in them no reference to ideas derived from classical mythology.

A preliminary synopsis, showing the general scheme, and the strong contrasts of which it allows, may first be given :

I. *Mars, the Bringer of War.* Sheer brutality and the senselessness of strife.

II. *Venus, the Bringer of Peace.* Sheer beauty, rather than mere peace—which is, after all, a purely negative thing.

III. *Mercury, the Winged Messenger.* Volatility—a rushing through space and never settling anywhere.

IV. *Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity.* The jollity that likes good meat and drink. In the middle, the dignity of Jupiter in a fine folk-songish strain.

V. *Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age.* This begins in bleakness, and ends in serenity.

VI. *Uranus, the Magician.* The eternal unexpected.

VII. *Neptune, the Mystic.* The whole universe dissolving into fluid, and dissolving in such beauty that we care not that we dissolve with it.

This synopsis was made from notes supplied to me by the composer before the first performance, and can, therefore, be taken as an accurate summary of his intentions.

The Orchestra used in the expression of the ideas and feelings suggested by the titles and description is a large one. It consists of :

- 4 FLUTES, with PICCOLOS and BASS FLUTE
- 3 OBOES, COR ANGLAIS and BASS OBOE
- 3 CLARINETS and BASS CLARINET
- 3 BASSOONS and DOUBLE BASSOON.
- 6 HORNS
- 4 TRUMPETS
- 3 TROMBONES and 2 TUBAS.
- 6 KETTLEDRUMS (2^d players)
- SIDE DRUM, BASS DRUM, TRIANGLE, TAMBOURINE,
CYMBALS, GONG, BELLS, GLOCKENSPIEL.
- CELESTA
- XYLOPHONE
- 2 HARPS
- ORGAN
- STRINGS.

In the last piece there is required a hidden choir of FEMALE VOICES, singing in 6 parts.

A GUIDE TO THE MUSIC.

MARS, THE BRINGER OF WAR.

This was written in 1914, shortly after the beginning of the war. It is probably the most powerful musical expression of the horror of strife that has ever been produced—and the most uncomfortable. Romance, high spirits, heroism, chivalry, have no place here, except, perhaps, for a brief trumpet-call passage. This is war naked of its trappings, modern war, with high explosives, poison gas, ruthlessness, and world-wide suffering.

First Side.

A strong constant DRUM RHYTHM, five beats in a bar pervades almost the whole piece, and in time attains a cumulative force that becomes almost unbearable. At the outset it is heard softly from the following instruments

All the STRINGS, played *col legno*, i.e., tapped with the wood of the bow, instead of played with the hair.

A KETTLEDRUM, played with wooden sticks instead of with the usual felt-headed sticks.

HARPS, giving the rhythm in an octave 'ping' low down the compass.

Against all this the GONG gives out a continuous, tremulous vibration. The effect of this combination is bare, gaunt and sinister.

Above this, almost immediately, appears a menacing phrase for BASSOONS, DOUBLE BASSOON and HORNS. It is repeated, and then climbs, reinforced by the successive addition of other wind instruments, until it grows into a long-held fairly loud chord, which gradually fades away.

TROMBONES take up the same *motif*, TRUMPETS join them; HORN and WOODWIND chords carry it on; by and by the TENOR TUBA forces out a slowly reiterated note, answered by Trumpets and UPPER WOODWIND; soon the whole orchestral force is engaged, the TROMBONES and TUBAS thundering out the horrible rhythm, with the Strings and Kettledrums which have all the time maintained it. This is the first climax of the piece.

The BRASS now introduce a smooth, almost slimy¹ *motif*, which, partly from its frequent harmonic treatment as a series of parallel common chords with their consecutive fifths, takes on an ashen colour of horror and disgust.

¹ On referring to the Columbia Company's own leaflet descriptive of the piece, I find it described as a 'squirmey tune, with a feeling between a wail and a growl'.

the WOOD WIND joins in, the music works up to its second climax.

The rhythm of the *motif* just mentioned (however it may be necessary to set it out in the score) is really $5/2$, one bar of it corresponding with (or rather conflicting with) two bars of the $5/4$ rhythms of the other instrument.

During this climax the generally pervading rhythm of the opening has dropped out ; after the final crash of the climax, it is resumed as a series of plain five-in-a-bar, STRING chords, through which penetrate warlike calls (with a bold triplet feature) given out at first responsively by TENOR TUBA and TRUMPET, and soon taken up by other instruments.

After a time BRASS alone carry on, for a time, this rhythm and these calls (with Side Drum taps and a roll on the cymbals as a background). Then rapidly rushing scale passages in STRINGS and WOOD are added and the music works up to another climax. As to form, this technically binds the First Section of the piece, which, however, proceeds continuously from beginning to end.

Second Side.

What is technically the *Middle Section* of the piece now begins.

The *motif* which I have described above as 'slimy' occupies our minds for a little time. It begins in a cadaverous tone from the BASSOON and DOUBLE BASSOON, with the Cellos and Double Basses, and other instruments joining in, working its way gradually up the compass of the orchestra until it has covered a range of about four octaves.

As it reaches the summit of its climb the original rhythmic *motif* bursts upon us with the full force of the orchestra. We are now launched upon the *Final Section* of the piece, which grows out of exactly the same material as the First section—the insistent rhythm, the menacing phrase, the 'slimy' *motif*, the responsive TUBA and TRUMPET war-cries,

and the rapid scaly passages for Wood and Strings. They do not occur in quite the same order as before, or with quite the same orchestration, but they are all there.

The piece ends very strongly with dissonant chords given out by BRASS, STRINGS and PERCUSSION in a forcible rhythm. (The closing passages of the piece are in $3/4$ time.)

A point as to the general rhythm of the piece. Of $5/4$ time, two varieties exist, $3/4 + 2/4$ and $2/4 + 3/4$. In *Mars* both are to be found, and their alternation in different sections of the piece contributes to its uneasy character.

These two Sides are finely recorded. There are a few places where instruments can be seen in the score which cannot be heard in the Record, but the general effect is exceedingly faithful.

In conclusion I quote with pleasure Mr. R. O. Morris on this movement of the Suite (*The Athenæum*, 3 December, 1920), for I think his description apt and true.

‘ In *Mars*, Mr. Holst has given us of his best and truest. Here are no heroics, no illusions, merely a swift and drastic summarisation of what war really means. Not of its externals ; it is not of the sights and sounds of war of which Mr. Holst has to tell us, but of that in man which makes war possible. All that is sinister and bloody and insatiable in the human heart seems to have found its way into this music ; that is what makes it so disturbing. It does not attempt to recall to us the reek of blood and the stench of decomposing entrails ; and yet it does recall these things, because it sees so deeply and clearly into the spirit of which they are a manifestation.’

II. VENUS, THE BRINGER OF PEACE.

This is a study in the use of soft orchestral tints. It is scored for Wood Wind, Horns, Strings, Harps, Glockenspiel and Celesta—no loud Brass or Percussion.

(*Adagio, slow.*) It opens with a single HORN, playing as simple a theme as can be imagined—merely the first four notes of the ascending minor scale.

This is repeated, but this time FLUTES and OBOES play

against it a somewhat similar but descending theme treated as a series of chords—very austere in feeling.

Soon are heard a series of shimmering chords in Flutes, Horns, Bassoons, Harps and Lower Strings, which serve as a background for the descending theme just mentioned, which is now heard first from GLOCKENSPIEL and 3 OBOES and then from CELESTA and FLUTES.

The single HORN with its ascending phrase, and FLUTES and CLARINETS (not Oboes this time) with the descending phrase, are heard again.

A rising *motif* in 'CELLOS and VIOLAS leads to a new section—

(*Andante, gently moving.*) A sensitive and appealing theme in a SOLO VIOLIN is heard, against a background of syncopated chords played by Oboes and Cor Anglais.

The other VIOLINS join in a repetition of this phrase, the syncopated chord background now being given to Horns.

ALL VIOLINS then continue the passage, evolving their continuation out of a dropping two-note figure, derived from the theme they have just been playing; the syncopated chord accompaniment continues, being given now to Oboes and Cor Anglais, Clarinets and a Horn.

Then whilst the VIOLINS hold a long note, and then mount aloft, the OBOE takes the dropping figure, and the Four Flutes the syncopated chord accompaniment.

The VIOLINS, now mounted high, descend again, to repetitions of the dropping figure, Flutes and Clarinets carrying on the syncopated chord accompaniment, Cor Anglais and Violas providing the bass.

The SOLO VIOLIN resumes its treatment of the sensitive and appealing theme with which it entered into the score a moment since, and of the dropping figure, which formed a part of this; the Four Flutes give the chord accompaniment.

An OBOE offers a momentary touch of melody, which is continued by the CLARINET with the dropping theme.

The FOUR HORNS are solemnly introduced, and against their long chord the 'CELLO mounts in a passage which begins by leaps and, tired, ends by steps.

The OBOE touch of melody is again heard, the VIOLAS (quite lost in this Record, however—almost its only defect) give out the dropping figure, against syncopated chords from Clarinets.

The FLUTE has a touch of melody ; as it continues, all the VIOLINS and VIOLAS join it.

In these last bars Violins, Violas, 'Cellos and Double Basses are all heard at one time, which has not up to this point occurred.

The **Second Side** repeats the same material, in much the same way except for changes of orchestration. It will have been noticed that what has been given as constituting the material of the First Side fell into two parts, of which the themes were different, the one *Adagio* and the other *Andante*. The Second Side gives a shortened version of these in this order : *Adagio—Andante—Adagio*.

Soon after the last *Adagio* opens (with the descending theme from the opening) a short upward scale sweep of HARPS is taken over and continued by CELESTA. Harps henceforth move more actively, introducing an arpeggio accompaniment figure which is also treated by various other instruments, including, after a time, the Celesta.

The piece ends very softly, with a high-lying chord for the upper Strings, Celesta triplets and Flute chords.

As a purely personal opinion—this is a notable attempt to represent the ethereal peace of a world without sin. Like such a world, possibly (but for want of experience I do not dogmatise), it rather lacks interest. Technically here is sheer beauty of tone, but musical themes barely attractive enough in themselves to keep our attention from beginning to end.

After the purposeful music of *War*, the attempt to hold us by picturing the negative qualities of Peace could,

I regret to feel, not very easily hold us. I look upon Mars as a masterpiece, but Venus as something short of one.

I give this view, not in an attempt to convert others to it, but merely for their interest in comparison.

As illustrating the diversity of view found amongst listeners I quote Dr. Vaughan Williams (*Music and Letters*, October, 1920), who, in discussing the seven pieces that make up the *Planets* Suite, says :

‘The most individual and beautiful seem to me to be Venus (though the middle section is not quite so good as the rest), Saturn, Jupiter and Neptune.’

Then what I think the worst movement of the Suite, Dr. Vaughan Williams thinks one of the best, and what I think the best part of it he thinks the worst. So do musicians differ—and, for that matter, so do lawyers, doctors and theologians.

III. MERCURY, THE WINGED MESSENGER.

This movement has been described as inferior. To me it is one of the best Scherzos ever written. The composer has set out to suggest lightness, grace, and the speed of thought, and has perfectly succeeded. Mercury is here a combination of Puck and Ariel.

The melodic and harmonic material and the orchestration are (given the *tempo* intended) excellent. The Movement is an exceedingly difficult one to play (I first heard *The Planets* at a rehearsal under Coates and when he came to this he cried: ‘Now we’ve come to the nasty one’), but when anything like adequately played, it always brings down the house. I myself somewhat despise the bringing down of houses, for houses, in this sense, are jerry built, and any piece that ends with full Brass and Percussion will usually bring them to the ground. When lightness and grace do the trick, however, I acquiesce.

Humour is also a factor in the success of the piece, but is not a gross or grinning humour (as I have just hinted,

the formula for its composition has been Ariel and Puck—and perhaps there is less Puck than Ariel).

Technically analysed, a good deal of the effect of the piece is seen to result from rhythmic shifts—shifts in a double sense, since, all the time under the notational description of 6/8, we get sometimes *two groups (each of three quavers)* in a bar, sometimes *three groups (each of two quavers)*, sometimes *three crotchets*, sometimes *eight quavers*, sometimes a *combination of two groups of three quavers in one instrument against three crotchets in another*, sometimes a *group of four even notes in one against a group of six even notes in the other*. Herein, partly (and partly in the speed and the light-handed orchestration), lies the suggestion of volatility.

I do not see that this is a Movement that calls for a bar-by-bar description; indeed, at the pace at which the music goes the description could hardly be followed.

Excepting the climax of the Middle Section, Strings are throughout muted.

At the opening is a small arch-shaped *motif*, handed up the orchestral compass from 'CELLOS and BASSOONS at the bottom to FLUTES and VIOLINS at the top, and then, similarly handed down. I hope the nickname of 'arch' may be accepted, in which case the seven bars which carry it to the summit and back again form an Arabian Arch like those seen in some Spanish cathedrals, a large arch constructed out of a number of smaller ones—a scalloped arch.

The colours however, as much as the shape, give it its individuality. From dark brown at the bottom it rushes to bright silver at the top.

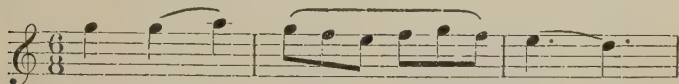
A three-crotchets-to-the-bar chordal *motif* is also a feature of this part of the Movement, and so is a rocket-like, fizzing, eight-quaver-to-the-bar ascending scale, which, like the arch *motif*, is handed up the orchestral range.

WOOD WIND, CELESTA and HARP play an active part in this, the opening section of the Movement, which ends with a *pianissimo*, long-drawn-out, high VIOLIN note (Harmonic).

This serves as a connection between the Opening Section and—

The MIDDLE SECTION. A descending chord *motif* in Wood Wind is the final feature of this. (Listeners who follow the piece with the orchestral score will expect the Glockenspiel here to make its one appearance of the Movement, but, for some unguessable reason, nothing is heard of it.)

Another prominent feature is the following little tune :



This is first heard from SOLO VIOLIN, then from OBOE, then from FLUTE, then from CELESTA, then from CLARINET, then from SECOND VIOLINS, then from ALL VIOLINS together, then from ALL VIOLINS IN OCTAVES, then from TRUMPET, WOOD WIND and VIOLAS, then from HORNS and WOOD, then from VIOLINS and FLUTE, then from HORNS and ALL STRINGS (except Double Basses) then from VIOLINS and OBOES, and lastly from FLUTES alone, with soft Bassoon holding-notes beneath.

In my judgment (which need not be the reader's), jolly as this little tune is, the manifold repetition of a diatonic scrap, all lying within the range of a fifth, and moreover always in the same key, is an example of too much of a good thing. I quote, however, an opposing view: the Queen's Hall Orchestra annotated programme is in the habit of suggesting: 'This passage, with its constant reiterations, has an almost mesmeric effect; some kinds of oratory produce the same result'. Without disrespect, and referring merely to the idea of the oratorical mesmerism of reiteration, this suggests that fish hawkers and newsboys are orators.

It is unfortunate, by the way, that we practically never hear this Tune as the composer, from his notation, obviously intended it. Probably, at the speed, it is difficult to prevent the two groups of three shown above from falling into

three groups of two. So I have heard them do when Coates conducts the work, and so they do here, under the composer's own conductorship. This is the more to be regretted, since the alternation shown above, of three crotchets, two triplet groups of quavers, and two dotted crotchets, is piquant.

The FINAL SECTION now begins. It is, roughly speaking, a reproduction of the Opening Section, extended by the insertion of a lengthy running quaver passage for Strings (sometimes with Wood Wind added); it is written in two groups of three, changing sometimes to three groups of two, the former, however, accented like the latter. There is also a passing reference, by a SOLO VIOLIN, to the diatonic little tune above quoted

A few notes of DOUBLE BASSOON just before the end are amusing.

Despite the rhythmic faults mentioned (of which, naturally, a listener without the score is not cognisant) this is an excellent Record.

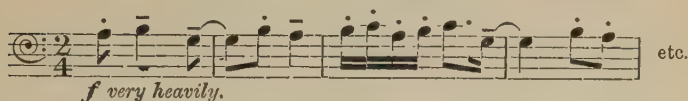
IV. JUPITER, THE BRINGER OF JOLLITY.

I propose to give a very close analysis of this, so that any highly intelligent and pertinacious gramophonist, who is determined to get the last ounce of musical understanding out of the Records he has bought with his hard-earned cash, may feel that he can look upon me as a friend. I have used bar numbers as indicators of locality, and, even to gramophonists who do not possess the orchestral score, these will be found more useful than might be supposed, as they make detection of the passages described pretty easy.

BARS

- 1-5 A bustling string figure (here on VIOLINS in 4 parts) which at once gives the spirit of the piece. It continues for 20 bars, and often reappears later—sometimes in Strings, sometimes in Wood.

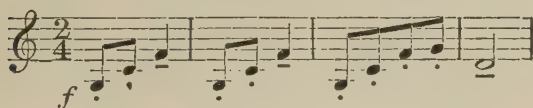
- 6-12 TUNE I. in HORNS, VIOLAS and 'CELLOS, against the background of the figure just mentioned.



- 16-21 TUNE I. in TROMBONE, TUBAS, KETTLEDRUMS, DOUBLE BASSES and LOWER WOOD, the figure just mentioned continuing and being reinforced now by Upper Wood—to bear the greater weight of the heavier instruments that have taken over Tune I.

- 22-7 FULL ORCHESTRA.

- 28-32 Upper Strings *tremolo*. Against this background, at bar 29 appears on HORNS TUNE II., *First Version*.



- 37-40 Against a same String Tremolo background, the same TUNE II., *First Version*, given to a TRUMPET this time.

- 40-4 Same TUNE II., *First Version*, in WOOD, and fragments of it in various instruments, leading to—

- 45-8 TUNE II., *Second Version*, in STRINGS and HORNS.



- 49-64 Opening figure in FLUTES and PICCOLOS (and later CLARINETS, with STRINGS *tremolo*) This figure first introduced as a background for TUNE I. is now used as a background for bits of the two versions of TUNE II., in various instruments.

- 65-75 TUNE II., *Third Version*, in STRINGS and HORNS in Unison, with an accompaniment of Bass Tuba and Double Bass, with Trombone chords added *off* the beats.



- 75-88 A rushing upward scale leads to the same tune, transferred to Wood (accompaniment much as before, but lighter chords by Trumpets, *off* the beats). A touch of Glockenspiel here and there.

After this all softens down, scraps of the same material being used, until shortly a *crescendo* begins, and leads into—

- 108-115 TUNE III., HORNS, with String chords on first beat of every bar.



- 116-123 Same TUNE III., STRINGS and WOOD in Unison and Octaves, Horns playing an arpeggio figure. Occasional drum beats.

- 124-131 Same tune in TRUMPETS in octaves; arpeggio figure, a little elaborated in Wood, chords on first beats by Strings; Tambourine rattles.

- 132-9 Same tune on STRINGS in unison plus TENOR TUBA.

- 140-7 Same tune in TRUMPET octaves (Glockenspiel active amongst accompanying instruments).

148-155 Same tune on KETTLEDRUMS, TUBAS, TROMBONES, 'CELLOS and VIOLAS.

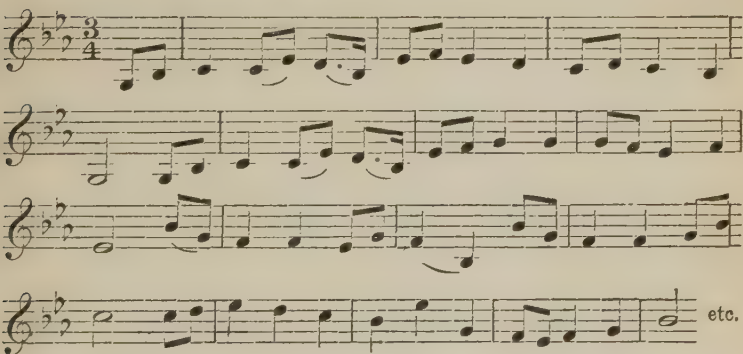
156 *Fortissimo* chords.

160 A rhythmic repeated figure in BRASS chords.

164-7 Similar figures in KETTLEDRUMS (in sixths), whilst Brass hold on to their last chord.

The passage which follows is made of the opening figure from TUNE II., *Second Version*, against a *pizzicato tremolo* low String background; it is soft, and so subdues our feelings, and prepares for the contrasting and bold tune which is about to enter.

193 TUNE IV., in STRINGS and HORNS in Unison against a background of Wood (and Harps).



at 205 A TRUMPET and the CLARINETS reinforce the tune. (Here first side of Record ends—surely not a very suitable place for a break, since we are in the middle of this noble tune, but presumably the composer has been a consenting party.)

at 217 FLUTES, OBOES and COR ANGLAIS reinforce it (soon joined by Horns), whilst Trumpets and Bass Tuba play chords. Note, if you can, that at this point the Kettledrums reinforce the bass. Presently almost Full Orchestra is in use.

- 234-246 Against Violins *tremolo*, the COR ANGLAIS gives out TUNE II., *First Version*, one-bar snatches of which are then taken up by Clarinet, Oboe, Flute, Piccolo, etc., leading, very effectively indeed, to the entry of—
- 246 TUNE I., on OBOE, with a similar Violin *tremolo* continuing; this is joined by PICCOLO (two octaves higher) and after this by CLARINET.
- 255 A TRUMPET rather tentatively takes up the theme against Wood semiquavers, the String *tremolo* continuing.
- 262 KETTLEDRUMS, TROMBONES and TUBAS (with String and Wood basses) thunder it.

From now onward the same material appears, used in various ways.

Note, in approaching the very end, that the opening part of TUNE IV. appears in all the BASS BRASS, WOOD and STRING instruments against rushing scale and arpeggio passages in the Treble Wood and Strings and the Harps. It is soon, however, handed over to the TRUMPETS.

Now for criticism—again for the reader's consideration and acceptance or rejection as he thinks best after careful listening :

Superficially this is one of the most attractive Movements. Rhythmically and melodically its four themes are distinctive and well contrasted. What we may call the background themes are also good. Generally also, the material is effectively used.

But a weakness is the habit of repeating themes in the same key (though of course with enhanced orchestral interest) straight away, *e.g.* :

- I. At once so repeated, bar 6
 bar 16
 bar 89

Cadential passage bar 25-7
 bar 33-5

II.	65-73	
	77-85	
III.	108	Horns
	116	Strings and Wood
	124	Trumpets
	132	Strings and Tenor Tuba
	140	Trumpets
	148	Kettledrums, Bass Tuba, 'Cellos and Violas, etc.
IV.	193	Strings and Horns
	209	Strings octave higher
	225	Strings octave higher still

Another point. Is all the material suitable to its purpose ? Of Theme IV., Dr. Vaughan Williams has said (as a parenthesis to a very reasonable eulogy of Holst, in *Music and Letters*, July, 1920) : 'It is a pity that this theme is hidden in the middle of *Jupiter*, which it does not seem altogether to fit. It ought to be the climax of some great movement which would take the place in the public affections of the sentimentalities of *Finlandia*. Or it might be . . . set to appropriate words . . . and sung at points of vantage when next we have a peace celebration (which Heaven forbend)'.

I venture to quote another opinion—similar yet not the same. Sitting next to G.B.S. on (I think) the first occasion when he heard this Suite, I received the following suggestion : 'Both the speed and the use made of that tune are wrong. It is an emotional thing ; it ought to go at half the speed. It has no place in *Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity*. It expresses all the sorrows of Ireland.' (I quote Mr. Shaw's dictum with his permission ; this was a criticism of detail, and does not affect his opinion as to the artistic value of *The Planets* as a whole.)

The antithesis of these two views is interesting as offering a splendid example of the importance of the *tempo* factor.

Dr. Vaughan Williams accepts the present *tempo*, and thinks the music gloriously triumphant ; Mr. Shaw imagines it at a slower *tempo*, and hears it as the expression of a noble sorrow.

Personally I go nearly all the way with Dr. Vaughan Williams and about half the way with Mr. Shaw. Except that the range is too great for popular singing, the tune would serve admirably the purpose suggested by the former. And the first part of it will bear the latter's interpretation—but not, I feel, the second part, which I can hardly bring myself to feel, at *any* speed, as other than exultant.

V. SATURN, THE BRINGER OF OLD AGE.

I think this one of the most satisfying movements in the Suite. The musical material has all shape and purpose, and the construction of the piece is organic—in other words, it gives the impression of a piece of natural growth, not of a manufactured article.

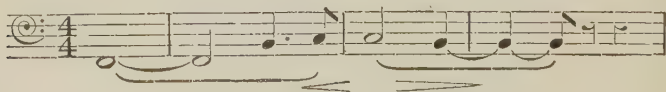
Whatever doubts I may have expressed about *Venus* cannot, in view of my admiration of *Saturn*, be taken to imply a reflection upon Holst's power of writing a successful slow movement.

I spoke above of the excellence of the musical material. There is very little of it, but so skilfully is it used, that we feel no lack.

The piece opens with a rocking figure in FLUTES and HARPS :

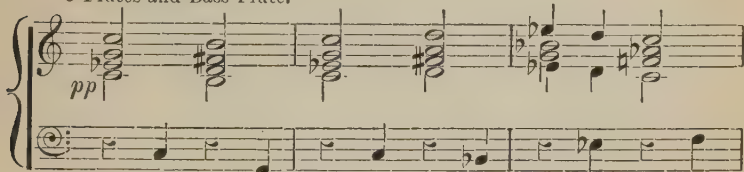


upon which creep in slowly the DOUBLE BASSES with this melody :

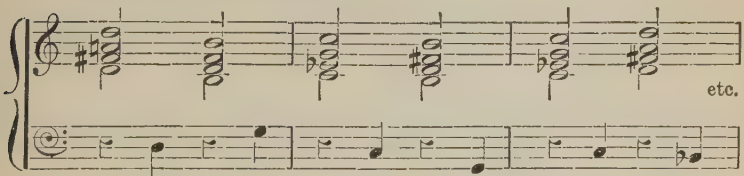


Some idea of what I meant by the use of the word 'organic' may be grasped when I point out that these themes, though they sound complete, and are for the moment all that the composer needs to develop his music through the first page or two, by and by extend themselves and attain a fuller growth. The *First Theme* thus becomes the following :

3 Flutes and Bass Flute.



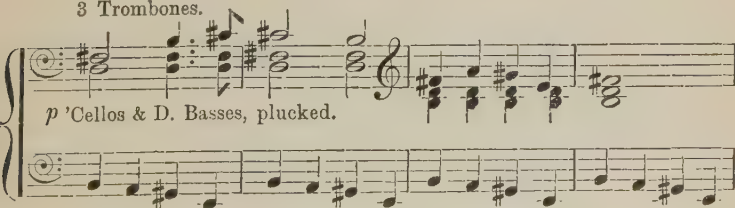
D. Basses, plucked, and Kettledrums.
(Harps playing low chords.)



This is heard from FLUTES, with HARPS, and a bass of detached notes played by *pizzicato* Double Bases and by Kettledrums, of which six are required, tuned to different notes (page 117 of score).

The *Second Theme* becomes the following :

3 Trombones.

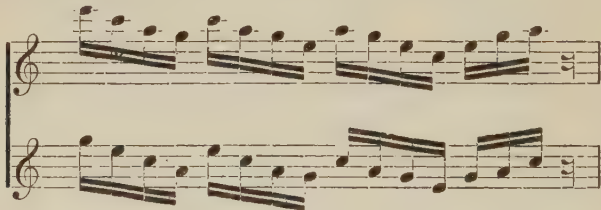


This is given to solemn TROMBONES, over a ground-bass of one bar, much repeated, played by 'Cellos and Double Bases, *pizzicato* (pages 115-6 of score).

This very ground-bass theme itself furnishes material, later, on the Second Side, for a long Harp passage, and then for a long Flute and Harp passage, and at last takes its final form in the FLUTES as follows (page 125 of score; the passage about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the inner circle of the Second Side, where the Bells enter) :



The HARPS meanwhile play against this a rapid passage which is really the same *motif* 'diminished'.



Unfortunately the performance recorded (usually a good one) is a little confused about here, and what has just been shown (the Flute passage especially) is difficult to catch.

This is absolutely all the material of the Movement, which thus grows entirely out of three short themes (sometimes separately heard, sometimes combined).

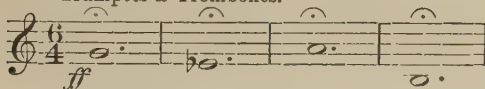
The harmony is often bleak and wintry. The orchestration is masterly. Economy of material and skill in construction are no bars to emotional power, and this Movement is one of the most moving of the seven. I particularly call attention to the long passage with which the First Side ends, which is ghostly and awful. Its opening is shown above, as the fully-grown First Theme.

VI. URANUS, THE MAGICIAN.

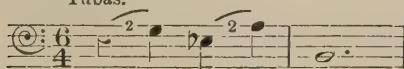
A 'motto' theme pervades this—perhaps, as a Queen's Hall Orchestra programme has called it, 'a kind of magic formula'.

It takes on many rhythms and colours :

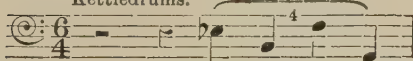
Trumpets & Trombones.



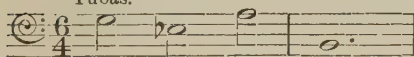
Tubas.



Kettledrums.



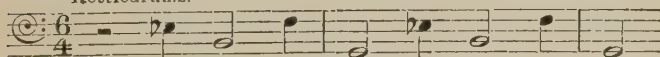
Tubas.



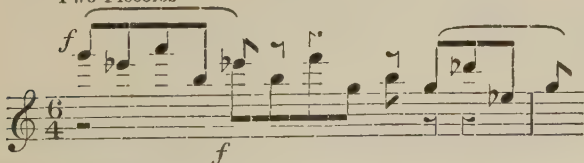
Trombones.



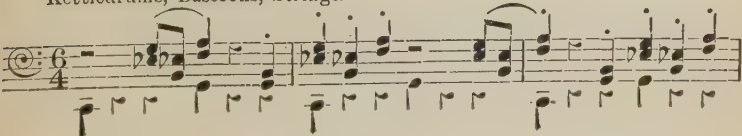
Kettledrums.



Two Piccolos



Kettledrums, Bassoons, Strings.





Other themes used are :



Out of these is put together a score that has certainly great humour and perhaps (especially in one or two moments of jazz) a little vulgarity. *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, of Dukas, may to some extent have suggested the general character of the piece, and an adverse critic has found in one of the above themes a quotation from a song I suppose I ought to know but don't (though it is easy enough to

recognise the theme in question): *To-night, to-night, we shall have a night to-night.*

The orchestra is a very full one, with the whole battery of Brass, and with six Kettledrums manipulated by two players, which allows of their melodic and even harmonic, as well as rhythmic, use. A sudden contrast between low-lying chords and high Piccolo squeaks is once or twice a feature.

One delight of the piece cannot be enjoyed from this Record—a magnificent upward *glissando* on the Full Organ. For that you must go to Queen's Hall; the Gramophone Companies have not yet installed four and five-manual organs in their recording rooms.

VII. NEPTUNE, THE MYSTIC.

Before beginning any technical description of this piece I would refer readers to the brief synopsis of the seven Movements given at the opening of my treatment of them. There they will find a better suggestion as to the poetical purpose the composer has in view than I myself can give them.

The material of this Movement is of the slightest. The two-bar theme with which it opens is the longest and chief one in the early part of the piece. It is here heard in parallel sixths from FLUTES and BASS FLUTE. Later it is heard in parallel chords of thirds and fifths, and in other forms, and then it dies out of the score and is never again heard.

Other material consists of mere single low chords for TROMBONES, shimmering HARP tremolos or arpeggio sweeps, long-held, high-lying chords for MUTED STRINGS, soft rolls on the CYMBALS (with felt-headed sticks), CELESTA scales of unusual construction, and the like.

After the turn of the Record the *tempo* quickens slightly, and against low STRING notes held for seven or eight bars at a time, we hear a WOOD WIND *motif*, then taken up by two groups each of two HORNS, playing antiphonally in

thirds ; against this is heard a long, winding CLARINET melody, which is immediately taken up by VIOLINS.

Then the *motif* just treated by Horns is taken up (again antiphonally) by a choir of WOMEN'S VOICES, 'to be placed in an adjoining room, the door of which is to be left open until the last bar of the piece, when it is to be slowly and silently closed'.

This ending is, perhaps, the most ethereal ever achieved. Vaughan Williams has said :

' We live in uncomfortable times just now ; we live in dread of what the future may bring. And such a work as *Neptune (The Mystic)* seems to give us such a glance into the future—it ends, so to speak, on a note of interrogation. Many composers have attempted this, sometimes bringing in the common chord at the end as an unwilling tribute to tradition, sometimes sophisticating it by the addition of one discordant note, sometimes letting the whole thin out into a single line of melody ; but Holst, in *Neptune*, actually causes the music to fade away to nothing.'¹

This *Neptune* is not, as has been asserted, the most formless piece ever attempted, for there is form in its parts, though not in its whole—material being introduced and used for a time, then discarded in favour of new material and never reappearing.

To me, despite the slightness of its material and the unusual treatment of it, the effect is satisfactory. The piece is short, and a plan is in it successfully adopted that would probably not be successful in a longer piece.

It is at least a daring thing to end a seven-movement Suite with a Movement so simple yet so subtle and so intentionally inconclusive.

¹ It may be remarked that the writer of that passage has himself, in one Movement of his *London Symphony*, ended by 'letting the whole thin out to a single line of melody'—a solo Viola, beginning *pianissimo*, continuing *diminuendo* and ending *niente*, and that the Symphony as a whole ends with a low chord in 'Cellos and Double Basses, beginning *ppp* and also continuing *diminuendo*, and ending *niente*.

As for *The Planets* as a whole, very widely differing views have been expressed. Audiences have almost invariably shown the greatest delight in the Suite. My own views as to the varying value of the different Movements will here have been noted, and it will have been realised, I think, that taking it for all in all I welcome it as a great contribution to the repertory, and as the work of a most sincere and often highly original artist.

Mr. Philip Heseltine (*The Sackbut*, March, 1921) called it 'a piece of plagiaristic and pretentious bombast' and added:

'The composition really provides a kind of test-case for critics in much the same way as the orchestral works of Bantock did some years ago. Both of these composers are very well up in all the popular tricks of the trade and make a brave show with their jugglery. But, unfortunately, their indebtedness to others is always very much in excess of their own personal contribution to the sum total.'

Mr. Samuel Langford (*Manchester Guardian*, 24th February, 1922) has said:

'As to the tangibility of the poetic scheme as a sound basis for music, we have grave doubts. . . . From this doubt we lend a very incomplete trust to the composer as we listen. When we find that he asks so much trust that we must be ready to swallow so much that is dire on behalf of such an alloy of poetic ideas, our rebellion goes further. . . . Can we honestly think that music has taught Mr. Holst all the art of *The Planets*? Is he not finding outside of music, and outside honest poetic feelings and ideas, excuses for a great deal that is unbeautiful. . . ?'

A Reviewer in *Musical Opinion* has said:

'Mr. Holst has had and deserves great credit for his remarkable achievement. In reading the work we have been more than ever struck with the fact that actual musical invention plays such a small part in the undoubtedly imposing result. There is practically only one tune in the work (in *Jupiter*) and that, be it said with respect, is a poor one. Mr. Holst gets what he wants by constant iteration of rhythm or harmonic progression and above all by the opulence and freedom of the instrumentation. We do not imagine the work would come out well in a piano transcription.'

As an offset, I quote Mr. Edwin Evans (*The Outlook*, 27th November, 1920) :

‘ If there is one quality more than another that impresses one in this work of Holst’s it is the composer’s uncompromising directness of expression. He was never at any time much addicted to the sin of musical rhetoric—a vice inherent in the German tradition, but which should from the first have been rejected by us as utterly alien to our habits of speech, musical or other. It doubtless would have been so rejected but for the glamour which great names had shed upon that tradition. Holst thinks musically, in terms of sonority not of rhetoric or moral philosophy. His music conveys its emotion not by the rhetorical development of a musical argument, but by a play of sonorities whose interaction of itself develops the emotional sentiment. One feels that he sat down to write music, and not romantic, or still less, didactic, literature. That he has taken for his subjects certain symbolical aspects of the seven Planets is not immediately relevant to the consideration of the result as music. He has an extraordinary sense of tone values, and many of his finest effects are due to intensity rather than construction. This probably accounts for much of the success of the recent performance, for an English audience has always been more easily impressed with intensity than with eloquence in speech. In that respect he approaches very nearly to the type we have in mind when looking forward to the appearance of a composer embodying characteristics which we should be able to recognise as English, without the aid either of folk-song or of the Tudor classics. That his name should be of foreign origin is of incidental interest, but no more, for his family has lived in England for upward of a century, and is completely Anglicised, both by associations and by marriages in each successive generation. He is in no sense a cosmopolitan like Delius, whom so many have acclaimed as a British composer, though it is difficult to discover an English trait in his whole musical personality. Nor is he indebted to the Celtic fringe. In fact, he is quite markedly immune from the dreaminess and with it the charm that comes to us on the west wind. His musical thought is for the most part too sane to be seductive. One might even describe it, in a musical sense, as plain matter-of-fact, and I do not believe that he would resent that description of it in all that it implies as understood in this context. It is a rare quality in music. Many composers are at such pains to present their musical thought in attractive form that in the end the thought itself is sacrificed and only the attractiveness remains. In each movement of *The Planets* there is thought, clear-cut and uncompromising, with no other adornment than that which grows out of itself. In place of the emotional nakedness of the romantics, which was largely literary, Holst, whose elaborations are strictly musical, gives us the

severity of the classic nude, which is much nearer to the ultimate ideals of music than even the greatest romantics have taken us.'

I have given these opinions and my own 'for what they are worth', and will as a last quotation give a suggestion offered to Sir John Dalrymple by Dr. Johnson (Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*):

'Sir John having affected to complain of the attacks made upon his *Memoirs*, Dr. Johnson said: "Nay, sir, do not complain. It is advantageous to an author that his books should be attacked as well as praised. Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck only at one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up, it must be struck at both ends."'

The important thing is that the reader should not allow himself, with Fame, to be made 'a shuttlecock'. It is not for *him* to be tossed from one opponent to the other, but to form his own considered opinion.

And writing this, I find the need for another quotation.

'It rests with a very wide public now to decide what the future of the art shall be'

That was written by Sir Hubert Parry, I think in 1884—long before the Pianola, the Gramophone and Broadcasting! The deciding public is now wider still, and its responsibility is proportionately greater. It must learn to think for itself!

MARCHING SONG.

This is given as a make-weight, occupying the reverse of the *Mercury* Record. It is an excellent little thing, somewhat of the *Pomp and Circumstance* type, making use of an Irish quasi-folk-tune for a part of its material. The spirit is one of exhilaration.

Seven Large Columbia Light Blue Records. Nos. L. 1528, 1499, 1543, 1459, 1532, 1509, 1542, each 7s. 6d.

Printed Music. Full orchestra score of *The Planets* published by Curwen; full size, 63s.; miniature size (not very clear), 10s.; Piano Duet arrangement, 10s. *Marching Song*, Full score, 5s. 6d.; Piano Solo arrangement, 2s. 3d.

RECORDS Nos. 45, 46, 47 and 48

Ballet Music . . . *Petrouchka* Stravinsky

ROYAL ALBERT HALL ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by Eugene Goossens)

The recording of *Petrouchka* is a notable event. It gives us all the opportunity of studying and re-studying a piece of music which marks an epoch in the modern history of the art.

Bear in mind, in listening to *Petrouchka*, that this is ballet-drama music. It is Stravinsky's business-like custom, when a piece of such music has for the time served its stage purposes, to announce that it is in reality a piece of symphonic music quite able to stand upon its own legs and requiring no longer those of the dancers. The score and parts are then issued for concert purposes, and the piece begins a new commercial and artistic life. This seems to be rather disingenuous. Stravinsky cannot have it both ways. Either a piece was written as symphonically complete and self-supporting, in which case the ballet-drama action was, from the outset, superfluous, or else it was written as accompaniment to a ballet-drama, in which case it will certainly not be found to be self-supporting as a piece of symphonic music.

In the old days, when a ballet was a mere brainless piece of formal human motion, more or less beautiful according to your ideas of beauty, its accompanying music was equally formal, and could with ease be detached for separate performances. But the glory of the Russian Ballet is that it has brought brains into ballet, and by this means made it the expression of dramatic thought and emotion. The ballet music composed by Stravinsky is no mere string of dances; it fits all the tiny details of the mimed play as a glove fits a hand. Much of it has more dramatic meaning than musical meaning. It is supremely adapted for its

purpose, as a piano accompaniment of a modern song may be, and, taken from its action, becomes as meaningless as the song accompaniment would be, taken from its vocal line and its words.

As a concert piece *Petrouchka* suffers in this way. Stravinsky's rhythms are so compelling and his orchestral colours so vivid that people are glad to hear *Petrouchka* even when they cannot see *Petrouchka*. But unless they know intimately the ballet-drama, and are able to follow with the eye of the mind to supply what is lacking, they must certainly be puzzled.

Stravinsky's score, by its detailed directions upon almost every page, testifies to the nicety with which music and action have been fitted, and this is further admitted by the (rather unexpected) appearance upon the title page of the name of Stravinsky's ballet collaborator upon equal terms with his own: *Petrouchka—Scènes burlesques en 4 tableaux, d'Igor Stravinsky et Alexandre Benois*.

That Stravinsky's music for *Petrouchka*, wonderful as it is, will keep the platform indefinitely without Benois' action for *Petrouchka*, i.e., purely as a concert piece, I do not believe. This *Petrouchka* is but half *Petrouchka*. Even as a half, it is, however, well worth having, for those of us who want to become acquainted with the trend of present day music, and I can suggest nothing more fascinating as a pastime of an intelligent gramophonist than a careful study of these four Records.¹

In order to help towards this I give below first a brief synopsis of the ballet-drama, and then a detailed description of it in the words of Stravinsky and Benois themselves, as recorded in the printed score, adding to the latter such indication as to the nature of the music that accompanies each event in the ballet-drama as will enable the listener to

¹ It is fair to add that in the case of *Petrouchka* there has been some recognition of the fact that for concert purposes selection is desirable. Two Suites have been compiled from it, one by the composer himself,

trace his way through the music as he hears it, understanding clearly what it is that the music is at any given moment trying to say.

The Plot.

A Russian fair is in progress, bewilderingly brilliant and noisy. A magician-showman exhibits three puppets, a Dancing Girl, a Blackamoor and Petrouchka. To all he has given a sort of fractional humanity—but to Petrouchka most. Petrouchka then can suffer, and does ; he is a pathetic figure, where the Blackamoor is but a brutish one, and the Dancing Girl not much more than the pretty doll that such girls sometimes are, even in real life.

Petrouchka loves the Dancing Girl. The Blackamoor kills him. The public are shocked ; the police appear. The magician-showman holds up the limp corpse. It is but a puppet after all. The crowd, reassured, disperses. The showman, with the puppet-body Petrouchka in his hands, turns to go in. There on the top of the show, grimacing at his creator, is a puppet soul Petrouchka. Petrouchka has been made human enough to have a ghost !

I do not know how that brief account reads to anyone who has never seen the thing on the stage, so will just add this word : Amidst all the glitter and bustle there is, when we see the Ballet as well as hear its music, an evocation of the feeling of sympathy. The helplessness and suffering of Petrouchka are made genuinely pathetic.

The Orchestra.

The force which Stravinsky employs is as follows :

STRINGS : As usual.

WOOD WIND : 4 FLUTES and 2 PICCOLOS.
 4 OBOES and COR ANGLAIS.
 4 CLARINETS and BASS CLARINET.
 4 BASSOONS and DOUBLE BASSOON.

BRASS : 4 HORNS.
 2 CORNETS
 2 TRUMPETS
 3 TROMBONES.
 TUBA.

PERCUSSION : KETTLEDRUMS.
 BIG DRUM.
 SMALL DRUM (*i.e.*, Snare Drum, or
 Military Drum).
 TABOR (= 'Tambour de Provence' in the
 score).
 CYMBALS.
 TAMTAM.
 TAMBOURINE (= 'Tambour de Basque' in
 the score).
 TRIANGLE.
 BELLS.
 XYLOPHONE.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS : 2 HARPS, PIANO, CELESTA (2
 players).

Ballet-Drama and Music—Step by Step.

Here I give, as promised, the actual indications of the printed score, adding to them such brief descriptions of the music as will enable any reader to follow the intention of the music, well-nigh note for note.

First Scene. *Shrovetide Carnival.*

SIDE I.

Prelude. The FLUTE *motif* at the opening is one of the principal *motifs* of the first part of this Scene. We might call it the Carnival *motif*.



Curtain rises. A group of drunken men pass, dancing (page 14). The music changes character here, a rude dance (two-in-a-bar, FULL ORCHESTRA) now opening.

The Showman of the Fair, from his platform, amuses the crowd (page 16). A long held BRASS chord immediately precedes the passage and calls attention to it.

Organ Grinder and a Dancing Girl appear in the crowd (page 19). A snatch of wheezy organ tune in CLARINETS announces their coming

Organ Grinder begins to play (page 21). The wheezy Organ tune in the Clarinets begins in good earnest (a very amusing reproduction).

Girl begins to dance, beating time with a triangle (page 22). A well-marked Organ tune (FLUTES and CLARINETS) with TRIANGLE punctuating it.

The Organ Grinder turns the handle with one hand and plays a Cornet with the other. A TRUMPET doubles the Flute-Clarinet organ tune.

At the other side of the Stage, a Musical Box begins to play, and around it another Dancing Girl performs (page 23). A GLOCKENSPIEL, CELESTA, and PICCOLOS represent the Musical Box, weaving in tune against that of the Clarinet barrel organ.

The First Dancing Girl begins to use her Triangle again (page 24). The Glockenspiel musical box, the Flute-Clarinet organ and the Triangle are all heard together; CELESTA (four hands) accompanies, with little runs on the PIANO.

The Organ Grinder begins again to play his Cornet. He only plays a couple of bars, however.

The Barrel Organ and the Musical Box cease playing and the Showman of the Fair begins his harangue again (page 27). The opening Flute tune (the Carnival motif, as we called it) is resumed momentarily, but this time in OBOES and GLOCKENSPIEL.

The Merry band of Drunken Men passes again (page 29) to the same jolly, thumping tune as before.

SIDE 2.

The Carnival motif, in FLUTES and OBOES, begins this side of the Record, and other material from the opening continues it—all rhythmically very forceful.

Two Drummers come forward in front of a Theatre Booth, drawing the attention of the crowd by their drumming (page 39). As everybody else stops playing, they cannot be missed.

The old Charlatan steps in front of the Booth (page 40)

The Conjuring Trick (page 41) A few bars of a chromatic character, with DOUBLE BASSOON grunts here and there.

The Charlatan plays the Flute (page 41). And a very banal tune he plays—pretty in its way, though!

The Curtain of the Theatre Booth goes up, and the crowd sees three Puppets—Petrouchka, a Moor and a Ballet Girl (page 42). The chromatic music again, but differently orchestrated.

The Charlatan brings them to life by playing his Flute (page 43). Not a tune this time—just a little two-note motif played three times at different pitches.

Petrouchka, the Moor and the Ballet Dancer, to the great astonishment of the public, begin to dance together (page 44). A long, jolly dance, mostly very rowdy, and with great variety of orchestration.

Curtain,

Second Scene.

SIDE 3.

As the Curtain goes up, the door of Petrouchka's room opens suddenly ; a foot projects him on to the stage ; he falls and the door closes behind him (page 63) All that is here described can be read into the music easily enough by an imaginative listener.

Petrouchka breaks into Curses (page 65). He swears in TRUMPET ARPEGGIOS (just after the passage for Piano alone), to the rattle of a Small Drum and Tambourine and some other accompaniment.

The Ballet Girl enters (page 69). At the place where a couple of bars of PIANO alone are followed by a much more rapid passage, by STRINGS, WOOD and HARPS.

The Ballet Girl goes away again (page 72) Just at the end of that rapid passage (the CLARINET SOLO immediately follows).

Petrouchka's Despair (page 75). Where the TRUMPETS enter.

The Curtain falls (page 77). As this side of the Record ends

Third Scene. *In the Moor's Apartment*

SIDE 4.

The Curtain rises (page 79). Just after the descending chords for 3 TROMBONES and the long pause with KETTLE-DRUM taps

The Moor dances (page 79). He begins this dancing to the oriental, languorous, impressive, melancholy CLARINET tune. (Pizzicato Strings and certain percussion effects, as accompaniment.) All the music of this dance is very cleverly contrived. It offers a remarkable example of darker tints in orchestration, and is rhythmically strong.

Appearance of the Ballet Girl (page 82). To a CORNET *motif* of three notes.

SIDE 5.

The Dance of the Ballet Girl (page 83). A battery on the Military SMALL DRUM, to which is soon added a purposely vulgar CORNET tune. A few chromatic bars and a FLUTE *roulade* follows.

Valse—The Ballet Girl and the Moor (page 84). This is amusing and delightful. It falls into several sections: (a) A BASSOON arpeggio bass, over which soon appears a responsive duet (*Cantabile sentimentalmente*) by CORNET and FLUTE; (b) A HARP accompaniment, with a sprightly FLUTE tune, into which the CORNET soon interjects occasional arpeggios. The COR ANGLAIS and DOUBLE BASSOON (reinforced by *pizzicato* 'Cellos and Double Basses) add a gruff counterpoint; some drumming and cymballing therewith; (c) A few bars of Chromatics; (d) Resumption of the CORNET and FLUTE duet, with an intruded chromatic *motif*, sometimes in Cor Anglais, sometimes in Horn, which is like a bit of grit in what has been smooth-running machinery. A light String accompaniment is also added.

The Moor and the Ballet Girl listen (page 89). A blow on BIG DRUM and CYMBALS, and some long HORN notes, with a *tremolo* in LOWER STRINGS, and a MUTED TRUMPET arpeggio (not heard in this Record).

Appearance of Petrouchka (page 89) Where the CORNET enters with the up-and-down arpeggio.

Quarrel of the Moor and Petrouchka. The Ballet Girl faints (page 91). Bustle music in STRINGS and BASSOONS—*qua* music very dreary.

The Moor ejects Petrouchka. Darkness falls. Curtain (page 95). Sharply sounded chords in STRINGS, WOOD and HORNS—very uncomfortable for Petrouchka.

Fourth Scene.*The Carnival Again—Towards Evening.***SIDE 6. (Page 96.)**

A joyous hum of TREMOLO STRINGS and WIND, with occasional sweep of upward HARP chords, and by and by a touch of TUBULAR BELLS. A moment's intermission (during which a thin little *staccato* figure is heard from Oboes, Horn, Trumpets) and, *Curtain* (p. 101), it starts again.

A few bars of Concertina-like music from OBOES, CLARINETS and HORNS lead to the—

Dance of Nursemaids (page 104). *Pizzicato* STRINGS with FOUR BASSOONS wobbling rapidly. A chromatic passage in thirds from FIRST VIOLINS soon creeps in, and then an OBOE SOLO of a very happy character—later taken over by HORN, and still later by VIOLINS. The *Carnival motif* in FLUTES (from the opening Scene of the Ballet) is also heard again.

A very amusing Guitar-imitation is followed by a few notes of call on the Oboe, and then comes a deliciously vulgar stuttering tune on TRUMPET, and so on.

A Peasant enters, with a Bear. The Crowd rushes towards them. The Peasant plays upon his pipe; the Bear walks on his hind legs (page 115). A Cymbal crash (not to be found in the score, by the way) ushers them in, and the Peasant begins to play a very high-lying tune on the CLARINET (which sounds more like the Flute) whilst the Bear growls out a TUBA tune.

The Peasant and the Bear move away (page 115). They soon go, and their going cannot pass unnoticed. The fun of the fair begins again, but more softly.

A Drunken Bourgeois comes on with two Gipsy Girls. He amuses himself by throwing bank notes to the crowd (page 118). These abandoned people have, nevertheless, a very jolly tune; they are certainly enjoying life.

SIDE 7.

The Gipsy Girls dance ; the Bourgeois plays the Accordion (page 120). There is no Accordion effect here, which I can recognise as such, though elsewhere in the work (e.g., page 103 of the score, and Side 6 of the Records) there is. The music at the opening of this Record is poor, scrambly stuff, but it is fair to say that an Oboe-Cor Anglais melody which should give it a little interest is, in this performance, covered up by the String scales.

After a time we hear (ALL STRINGS IN OCTAVES) the trivial tune to which the gipsies and merchant entered in the previous Record.

The Merchant and the Gipsy Girls move away (page 125). They do so to one of the most curious passages in the piece—a figure treated antiphonally by two MUTED TRUMPETS *lanissimo*, accompanied very beautifully by a throbbing open fifth from the HARPS.

Dance of Coachmen and Grooms (page 126). Reiterated chords of a curious dry un-resonance, amidst which short phrases for the various BRASS instruments in turn (Trumpets, Trombones, Horns, in each case in octaves) pick their way.

The Nursemaids dance with the Coachmen and Grooms (page 131). The tune of the Dance of Nurses (page 104 of score ; Side 6 of Records) returns, first on CLARINETS and BASSOONS and then on ALL STRINGS in octaves.

There is a shattering little five-chord *motif* for TROMBONES and TUBA (later with Cornets and Trumpets added). A TRUMPET-TROMBONE tune then enters and the fun grows serious.

The Maskers (page 139). As the last-mentioned tune abruptly ends, a scrambly passage for HARPS, CELESTA and WOOD begins. This develops and a BRASS CALL becomes a feature, just as—

The Devil-Masker persuades the crowd to romp with him (page 142). The Brass call enters here, as above mentioned with rather sinister effect.

Buffoonery of the Maskers—Goat and Pig (page 144). Reiterated chords on STRINGS, with WIND bleats and grunts.

The Maskers and the Fancy-dress Revellers dance (page 146). Where the GLOCKENSPIEL comes in.

The rest of the crowd join the Maskers in their dancing (page 149). Where a high HORN tune comes in, to a three-note motif in pizzicato STRINGS, which (the passage being in duple time) is constantly varying its note of accent.

The crowd goes on with its dancing, ignoring the cries which are heard coming from the little Theatre (page 150). Long held notes for MUTED TRUMPETS and CORNETS (and no other instruments at all heard) terminating in a tiny Trumpet flourish.

SIDE 8.

This side contains some of the most remarkable orchestration (of the more delicate type) of the whole Ballet, and is well worth careful attention.

The Dance is broken up. Petrouchka is seen escaping from the little Theatre, pursued by the Moor, whom the Ballet Girl tries to hold back (page 151). A COR ANGLAIS arpeggio followed by two Violin 'pings'; then some very remarkable passages of agitation.

The Moor, in a fury, catches up with Petrouchka, and fetches him a blow with his sword (page 152). He rushes at him in a downward chromatic VIOLIN scale, and smashes his brain-pan in with a bang on the CYMBAL.

Petrouchka falls—his skull broken (page 153). He ought to fall with a dull thud made by holding the Tambourine near the floor and dropping it, but this cannot be heard in the present performance.

A crowd collects around Petrouchka (page 153). The music of lament is very remarkable.

He dies bemoaning his lot. They send a policeman to seek the Charlatan (page 154). Where the couple of bars of sorrowful VIOLIN SOLO are heard.

The Charlatan arrives (page 154). At the end of the queer BASSOON pom-pom passage (to which the Bass Clarinet has added one or two grunts of sympathy).

He lifts up the body of Petrouchka, shaking it (page 154). He lifts it to the descending chromatic wail on the HORNS, with grunts in DOUBLE BASSOON ; and shakes it to the sound of tremulous STRINGS.

The Public dwindles away (page 155). To what sounds to me like an Accordion effect in HORNS.

The Charlatan remains alone on the Stage ; he drags the corpse of Petrouchka towards the little Theatre (page 155). The Accordion effect continues.

On the top of the little Theatre appears, threateningly, the ghost of Petrouchka ; he makes a long nose at the Charlatan (page 156). The ghost of Petrouchka is accompanied by the ghost of a Trumpet tune (a SMALL HIGH-PITCHED TRUMPET, MUTED).

The Charlatan, affrighted, drops the Puppet-Petrouchka, and rushes off, glancing fearfully behind him (page 156). To two TRUMPETS playing discordantly a little tune derived from the very opening Flute tune of the whole Ballet.

Curtain.

At the end of the score appear the words 'Rome, 13-26 May, 1911'. If this means that only thirteen days were occupied in the composition we may be astonished.

It may be of interest to some to see *Petrouchka* placed chronologically in relation to some of its composer's other works :

<i>The Firebird</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1910
<i>Petrouchka</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1911
<i>The Rite of Spring</i>	1913
<i>The Nightingale</i>	1914
<i>Symphony of Wind Instruments</i>	1920

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RECORDS Nos. 49 and 50

Orchestral Suite *The Sea* Frank Bridge
THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
(Conducted by the Composer)

This is one of the works which has won a Carnegie Award and been published in the 'Carnegie Collection of British Music'. The Carnegie Adjudicators described it as 'A very striking piece of tone-painting, and a notable example of what, for want of a better word, is called "atmosphere" in music'. It was written in 1910-11, and had its first performance at the Queen's Hall in 1912.

I do not propose to give a very detailed account of the work, which largely tells its own tale.

The Suite is in four movements. The Queen's Hall 'Prom' programme has (with the composer's authority) described the intention of each of these as follows:

I. SEASCAPE.—paints the sea on a summer morning. From high cliffs is seen a great expanse of waters lying in the sunlight. Warm breezes play over the surface

II. SEA FOAM.—The sea foam froths among the low-lying rocks and pools on the shore—playfully, not stormily.

III. MOONLIGHT.—A calm sea at night. First the moonbeams are struggling to pierce through dark clouds, which at last pass over, leaving the sea shimmering in full moonlight.

IV. STORM.—A raging storm. Wind, rain and tempestuous seas. With the lulling of the storm an allusion to the first movement is heard.

With this description before one, all that is necessary in order to gain a general idea of the content and character of the piece is a selection of its musical themes. Some of these follow.

From the opening of the *First Movement*:

Violas (against a long-held chord in Wood Wind)

Allegro ben moderato.

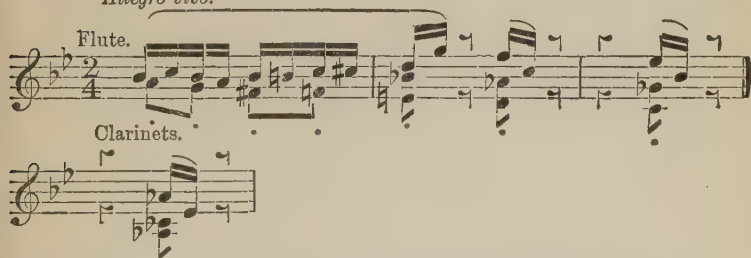


This is immediately answered by a theme of which a good deal of use is made and which at last appears as follows :



The opening of the *Second Movement (Sea Foam)* :

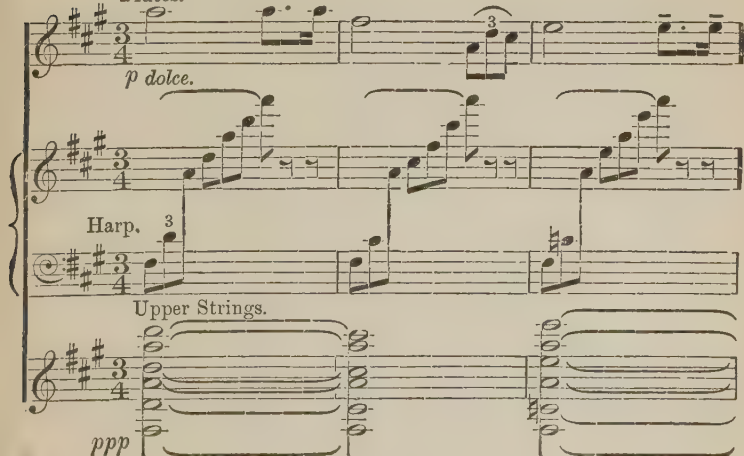
Allegro vivo.



First main theme of the *Third Movement (Moonlight)* :

Adagio ma non troppo.

Flutes.



One of the introductory themes of the *Last Movement* (*Storm*) :

Horns (against String tremolo chords, held notes in Cor Anglais, Bass Clarinet and Double Bassoon, and with an occasional Piccolo shake).



The Record is a pretty good one, though, unfortunately, it cannot give a full idea of the *power* of an actual concert performance.

The 'cuts' are slight—

Third Movement : 6 bars on page 59 of score, 4 bars on page 64 of score (the last four bars of the *Third Movement*).

Fourth Movement : 43 bars, including one bar of page 100, the whole of pages 101-2-3-4, and all of page 105 except the last 3 bars.

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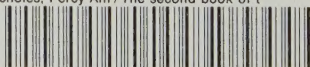
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